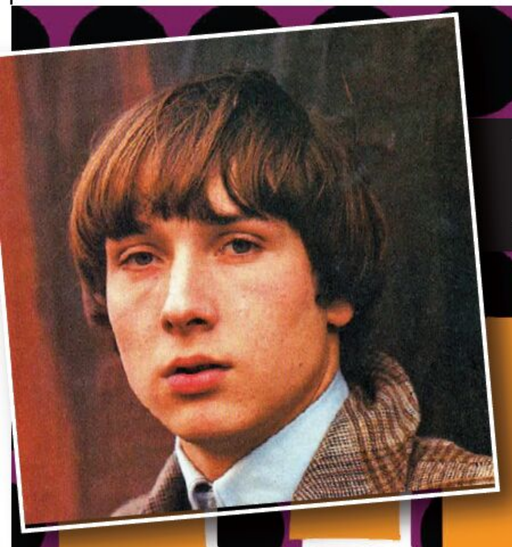

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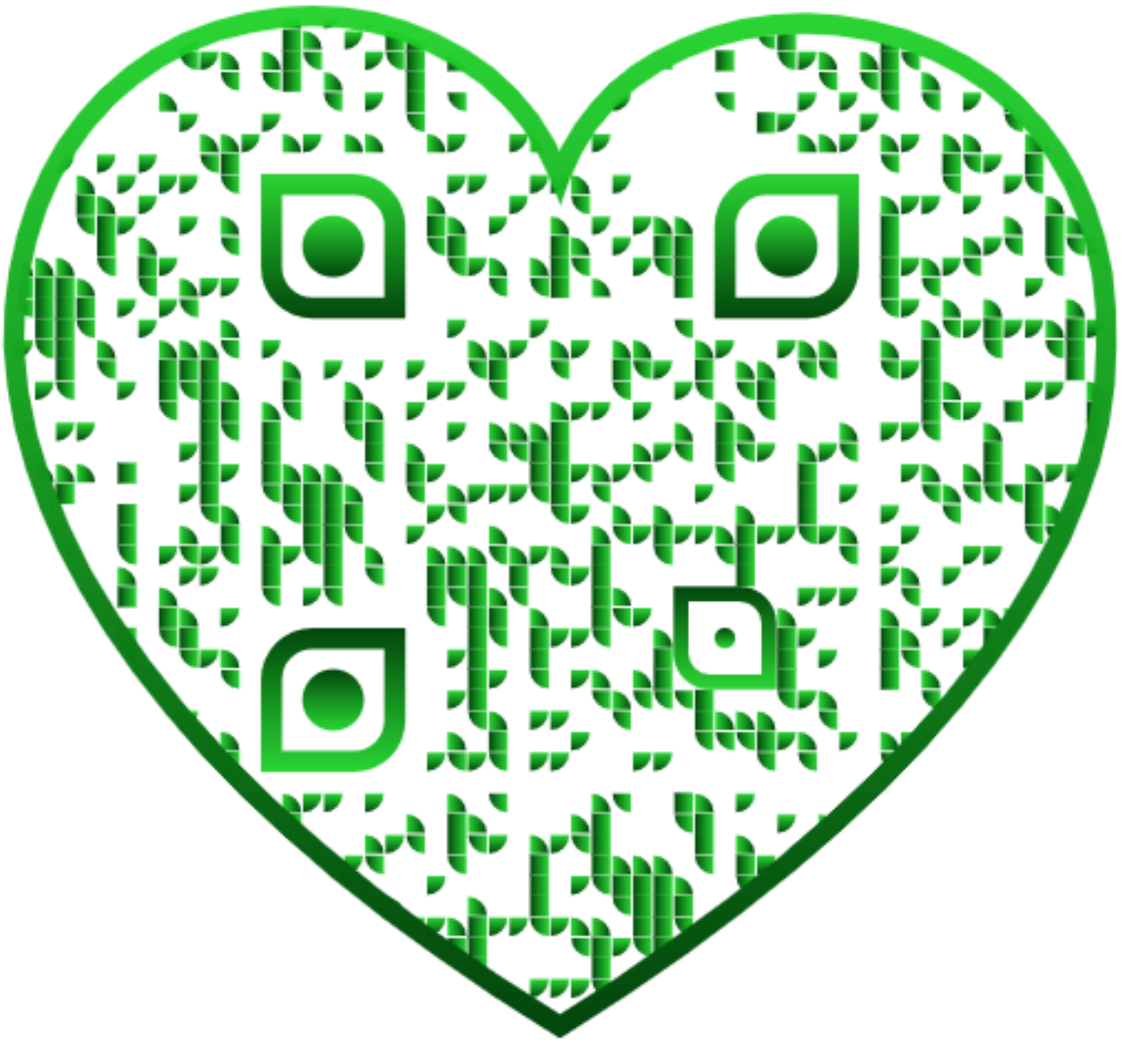

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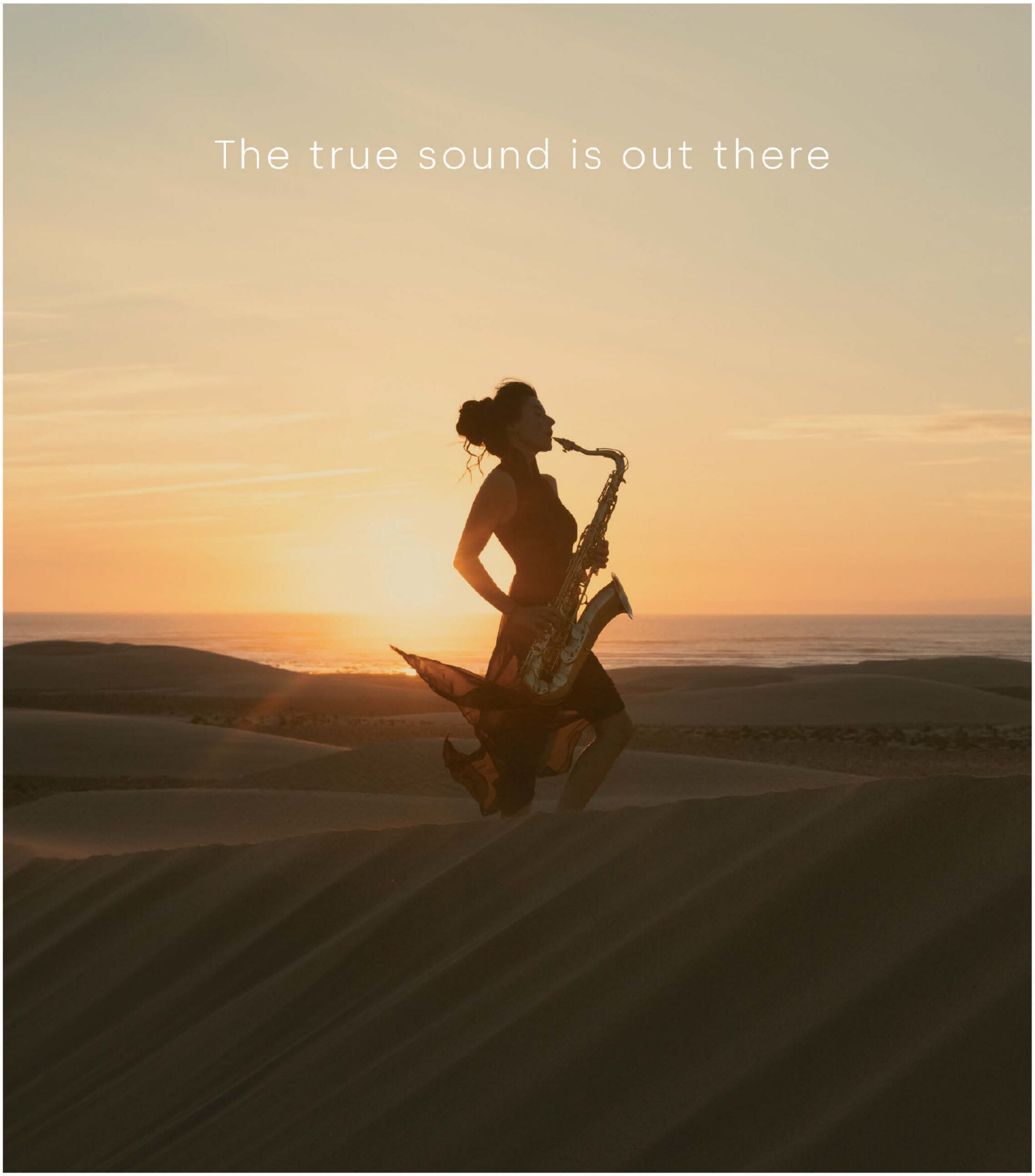

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SHINDIG!

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"It was always a compromise to try to find something that was new, a bit commercial and which at the same time lent itself to adaptation"

welcome

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Hi Shindiggers,

The cover story of this issue will please quite a few of you. After asking what readers would like to see featured in the mag, the Joe Meek response was huge. So here we are. In true *Shindig!* style we, of course, look at the freakbeat bordering proto-psychedelic recordings that Meek made in the mid-60s before the horrific end of his life. I'm sure you'll be blasting classics from The Syndicats, David John & The Mood and Paul & Ritchie & The Crying Shames post-haste and investing in the fascinating 'Tea Chest' releases that Cherry Red is rolling out.

Elsewhere we gently veer from the classic period of KPM's defining library music to Geordie vocalist extraordinaire Graham Bell, French dude Ronnie Bird, and an enlightening interview with esteemed music journalist and editor Allan Jones. New music from Uni Boys and Say She She, not so new music from South London Americana acolytes Grand Drive, a dive into the exotica/lounge revival and a Syd Barrett-like selection of era-spanning deep cuts all add to our essential mix.

Please don't forget that the repercussions and knock-on effect from all that's happened over the past few years still make publishing a music magazine a major challenge. Whatever business you're in, things are tough. To enable Shindig! to thrive, we'd really appreciate everyone subscribing and telling the denizens of your favourite local record shops to do the same.

Stay cool.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills,
Editor-In-Chief

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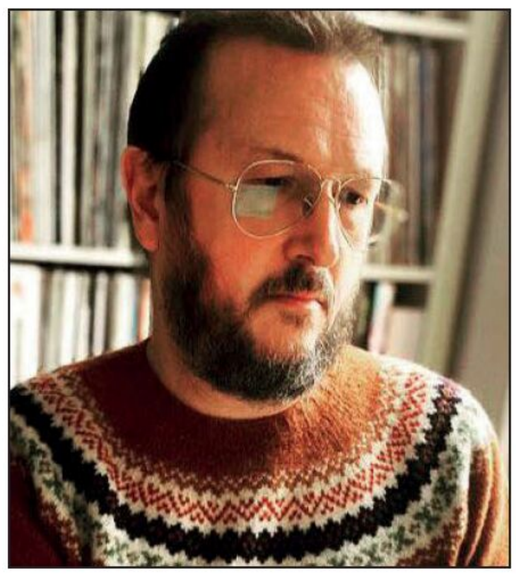

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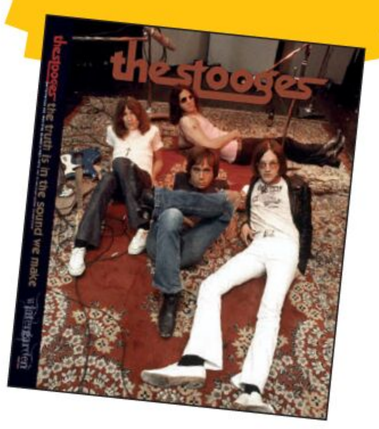
This luxurious Stooges recording/concert book



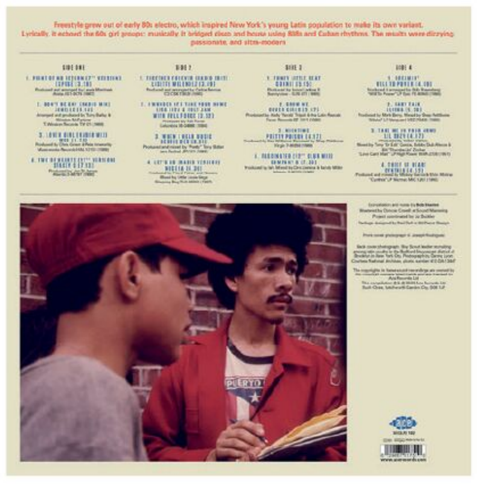
We only have one copy left now of our Godley & Creme limited edition vinyl. Head to silverbackpublishing.rocks/product/godley-cremes-lost-60s-recordings-exclusive-vinyl-offer/ to buy. First come, first served.

New releases: September 2023

Latin Freestyle
New York / Miami 1983-1992

CDCHD 1617/ XXQLP2 112 2LP

Freestyle grew out of early 80s electro, which inspired New York's young Latin population to make its own variant. Lyrically, it echoed the 60s girl-groups; musically, it bridged disco and house using 808s and Cuban rhythms. The results were dizzying, passionate, and ultra-modern.



Hearts For Sale! Girl Group Sounds USA 1961-1967

CHD 1627 (LP)

The fifth and latest in our series of 12-inch vinyl albums spotlighting the US girl group sound of the 1960s.

Darrow Fletcher / Hope For Love C/W No Limit

CITY 088 7"

A rare early 70s Darrow Fletcher track, originally made to interest Ray Charles, paired with the popular "No Limit" which sold out as a limited-run 45 back in 2012.

Joe Graham / John Edwards / Higher Than High C/W It's Got To Be The Real Thing For Me

CITY 087 7"

'Higher Than High' is an unreleased soulful disco number recorded around 1976 for the GRC stable. The flip is an up-tempo Sam Dees song, unheard until the 1990s release of the first batch of GRC/Aware tapes

Ornette Coleman / Friends And Neighbours

HIQLP 116 LP

The first vinyl reissue in nearly 20 years for this Ornette Coleman album using fresh 24/96 transfers from the original production master. The album was recorded at his loft in downtown New York.

The Sheppards / Stubborn Heart C/W How Do You Like It

REPRO 13 7"

'Stubborn Heart' has been played since the early days of the scene but is still a guaranteed floor-filler. The flip has also picked up many spins in recent years.

Clydene Jackson / I Need Your Love C/W We're In Love

CITY 091 7"

'I Need Your Love' appeared on Clydene Jackson's 1975 debut LP for Ray Charles Crossover imprint, the flip is another self-penned track from the same LP.

Connie Stevens / Tick Tock C/W Keep On Growing

NW 514 (7")

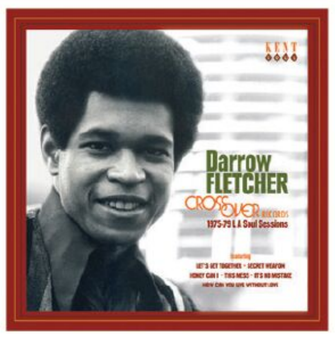
The new single on Bob Stanley's Measured Mile label is a terrific double-header from Connie Stevens. A northern soul monster, arranged by the late Philly soul legend Thom Bell.

Karen Verros / You Just Gotta Know My Mind C/W Karen's Theme

NW 516 7"

First issued on the Dot label in 1965, 'You Just Gotta Know My Mind' is one of the most popular and in-demand tracks ever to appear on our "Girls With Guitars" compilation series.

Also available:



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WHOLE ERIC

Hi Jon,

Issue #142 was another glorious romp through the music that binds us. I'm so glad Wreckless Eric continues to produce work. His stint on Stiff produced some great moments that never got the mass sales I thought they deserved. Besides the well noted titles, I think 'A Pop Song', 'Take The Cash (K.A.S.H.)', 'Let's Go To The Pictures' and "The Final Taxi' are superb, containing some clever lyrics.

I recall that he didn't enjoy working with Pete Solley – yet Solley was able to get The Romantics 'What I Like About You' to be a well-made record.

Kind regards,

Richard Gould

Glad you enjoyed it. And yes, Eric is unique.

PULSATING DREAM

Dear Jon,

After the untimely passing of David Lindley, a cover of the one and only American Kaleidoscope would be nice. I still remember fondly the appearance of the Lindley and Cooder families at the Viennese Opera in 1995. The recording is still available from davidlindley.com and highly recommended.

Cheers

Christian Boukal

Whilst we have done a Chris Darrow article in issue #101 we have not done anything solo on the epic Kaleidoscope.

SOMEONE LOVES ME

Hi Jon,

Three cheers for you and the mag! Never before have I read anything relating to Melanie, in any music monthly, in all the years I've been buying them. It's pretty frustrating to be honest and a little disrespectful too given what she achieved, particularly during the early '70s.

Sadly none of the original vinyl releases have seen the light of day through re-mastering. Fortunately, I now have all her reissued albums on CD and have noticed many have now been deleted.

The pages devoted to her in *Shindig!* #142 were a pleasant surprise and a joy to read. As a result, I have pre ordered *The Magic Bus* album and also the Dave Thompson book!

Many thanks.

Regards,

Alan Atkinson

Our pleasure. It was something Dave suggested and we are very happy to have it published. Thanks.

VOCAL SHADES & TONES

Hi Jon,

I must confess to doing a double-take when I took my first look at the front cover of issue #142 to see The Four King Cousins! As an unashamed lover of soft-rock and all things sunshine-pop I have long been a fan of theirs and of course that great 1968 album. But I'd always assumed (incorrectly it appears) that a group which would not be out of place on the Dean Martin or Andy Williams TV shows would lack the necessary *Shindig!*-cred. How wrong I was. It's a great piece.

You've been asking us recently for our thoughts/suggestions regarding future *Shindig!* content. The publication of this piece caused me to reconsider artistes that I had previously feared might be out of place in the magazine. Here are just three for starters.

Friday Brown – a fine early British female singer/songwriter with a measure of northern soul cred

Barbara Moore –a wonderfully talented yet criminally widely unknown composer/arranger/producer/session singer etc

The Orchids – don't be fooled by their nerdy schoolgirl appearance. These three girls rock and their early '60s singles had a sound that led listeners at the time to assume they were a Black New York girl group.

Every *Shindig!* issue always delights with an absorbing variety of features. In the current issue The Four King Cousins sit alongside The Bees and Melanie.

Wonderful stuff.

Best wishes,

David Pearson

Excellent ideas one and all. We strive for variety.

FROM HERE TO THERE

Hi Jon,

I pick up copies of *Shindig*! on a fairly regular basis and was completely over the moon when my first solo album was reviewed, a while ago. And a good review, at that!

Believe me, after over 30 years of playing, touring, recording, this is still something I'm not taking for granted. I hope I never will. And now, there's a review of an album I played guitar on, and my name is even mentioned, AND it's in the same issue that has an article about Nick Drake. To me, that's a big thing. Being mentioned in a fucking cool English magazine with Nick Drake in it.

My life is a bit of a mess right now, but yeah, this lifts my spirits up. Big time.

Thanks. Seriously.

Eric Geevers

You deserve it Eric. Thank you for the music.

FLASHBACK TO ACID BEACH

Hello Jon,

Seeing as you've kind of made an "official" move into the '80s I was thinking about bands I'd like to see have a major feature in the magazine; apologies if you've already "done" them.

Plasticland – on the strength of the first LP alone they're among the best psychedelic/neo-psychedelic bands to come out of the USA. There may have been a drop-off in quality after that, but there's still some great stuff kicking around, and enough to warrant a decent-sized article.

The Spikes – that's the Oz band from Adelaide. I know you had The Hoodoo Gurus a few issues back, but I'd really

STAR LETTER

VIRGIN LAND

Hi Jon,

Thank you for your excellent publication, I've gone from an occasional buyer to being a dedicated *Shindig!* subscriber.

Now 60 years of age and a retired music teacher, I have just started working in my local record store. Although a "child of punk" I have a deep love of most genres of music (Hot raves: Beatles, Byrds, *Nuggets*/ psych, be-bop, Curtis Mayfield etc) a lot of which I have found within your pages.

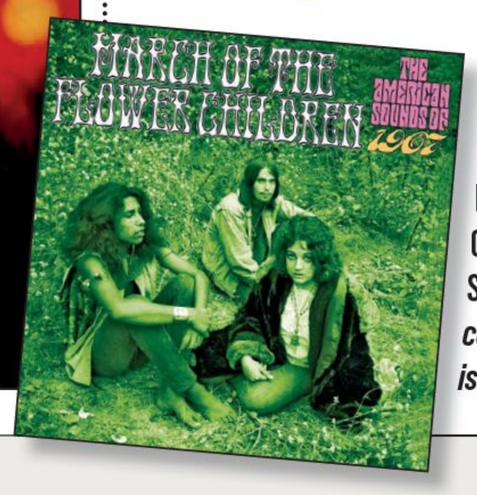
Without being too poetic I feel my recent new employment opportunity together with your publication have led me to a somewhat musical re-birth. Finding releases from artists I might not have considered or not been aware of has been really refreshing.

In closing what about a feature on CTI Records? It's a great soul/jazz label with a roster of artists such as Joe Beck, Hank Crawford, George Benson, Grover Washington Jnr and Esther Philips. They are really floating this old boat at the moment.

Keep up the good work.

Martin Olyett

The classic 1974 Airto CTI album



CTI – what an excellent idea. A copy of the fab new Grapefruit box* March Of The Flower Children: The American Sounds Of 1967*, which contains oodles of psych, is on its way.

like to see something else on the Oz '80s scene; bands like The Lime Spiders etc. Perhaps that kind of feature but with an extensive section on The Spikes? Their two LPs have remained with me for ages, but they seem to be a band with very little info on them, at least for people like me who aren't really so immersed in the garage scene.

Staying in that part of the world, Flying Nun. Not sure if they'd form part of the "*Shindig!* remit", although I know your remit is to go where you want and not be limited (which is one of the reasons that *Shindig!* is such a strong mag), but maybe some of the more '60s/psychedelically-inclined acts on the label? And include The Bats because they're one of the greatest bands ever.

One final question, completely unrelated to the above: Camilla Aisa is your resident Guided by Voices person and I'm just wondering if she like me thinks we entered a new GBV Golden Age at the end of 2020 which, aside from the misstep of *Earth Man Blues*, is still unbroken.

Best Regards

Graham Jackson

Camilla says: "The GBV portion of my heart still mainly resides in 1996 and 2001 but yes, what a tight and rewarding new era this is! I wholeheartedly dig all of the above suggestions. Just read the news of Ron Peno's passing – he fronted another Aussie psych fave from the '80s, Died Pretty, and I would add them to the list as well."

And yes, great ideas all round Graham. You're not the first to ask for Flying Nun either.

SMOKEY POKEY WORLD

Hi Jon,

Several times a month I visit my local record shop, Dearborn Music. I usually check out the music magazine and book section first before I dive into the LPs, CDs and 45rpm singles. Last week I noticed the latest issue of *Shindig!* with The Teardrop Explodes on the cover, but what actually drew me to this issue were the three words "*Pebbles*", "Mike" and "Stax".

Back in the day, I designed several LP sleeves for Greg Shaw, including two *Pebbles* volumes. Mike is another person that I consider a friend. I have not only heard his band The Loons when they opened for Cyril Jordan's Magic Christian, but have written an article about Detroit's folk-rock-psych band The Spike-Drivers for Mike's *Ugly Things* magazine too. I am working on another article about the independent recording scene in Detroit in the '70s. Back in those days, I designed hundreds of 45rpm picture sleeves, concert posters and flyer adverts for local Detroit bands, such as, The Mutants, The Reruns, Destroy All Monsters, The Ivories, Cinecyde, Sonic's Rendezvous Band and so many others.

As an avid and regular *Shindig!* reader, I have a request for an article about Mick Wayne and his group's Tickle (formerly A Bunch Of Five) and Junior's Eyes. I was going through an old photo album and found a picture of Mick Wayne that I took when he was in A Bunch Of Five. At the time, I was doing my military service and was stationed in Sinop, Turkey. While there the soldier's club on our base had entertainment and often they would book bands from England. We had a couple of bands on the base called The Gun Runners (who played country music) and Part II (a rock 'n' roll band that I was in).

During our time off, the members of my band and I got to hang out with Mick Wayne and a couple of his band members in our rehearsal space. Mick taught us two new Beatles songs 'Penny Lane' and 'Strawberry Fields Forever'. He talked about forming a psychedelic band in the near future and said he wanted to name it Egg. When A Bunch Of Five returned to England they changed their name to Tickle. Later one of the band members was in a band called Egg (so that name must have been talked about), I know Tickle had at least one single and Junior's Eyes had one album, but I know little more than that, other than his bandmates teased him because he had been in a later version of The Hullaballoos. I thought he was a great guitarist. Somewhere I read that he passed away.

Sincerely,

Dennis Loren

Amazing memories Denis. Yes, Tickle issued the one classic 1967 single and Junior's Eyes four singles and an album that took the psychedelia into the progressive, all produced by Tony Visconti. Mick Wayne sadly died in '94.

SHINDIG!

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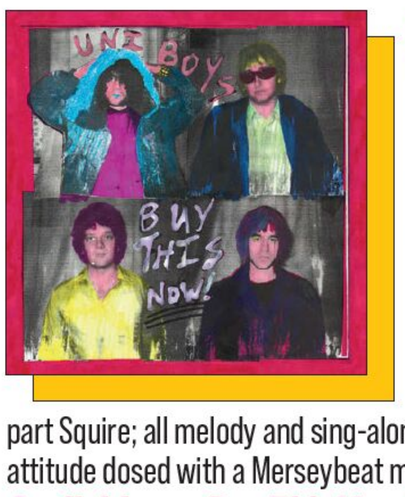
shindiggin'

What's HOT on the Shindig! turntable

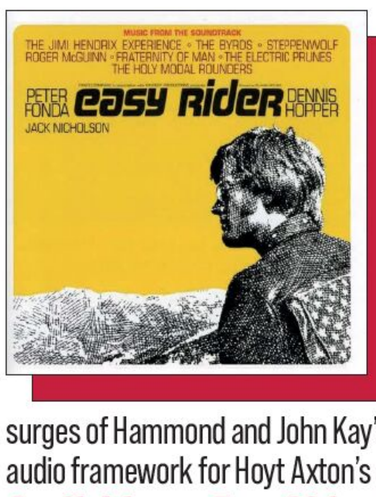
The brand new releases, compilation standouts, old album tracks and dusty 45s rockin' our world this month



UNI BOYS
I Want It Too

Michael and Brian D'Addario not only appear on LA quartet Uni Boys' new album, they produce it too. With Reza Matin currently a member of The Lemon Twigs' touring band the bond is tight, and both acts' vintage influences come from the same terrain, which is cap-lettered bouncy late '70s and early '80s Brit Invasion-informed powerpop. 'I Want It Too' is legs-splayed, gum-chewin' high-octane teen innocence, part Ramones, part Squire; all melody and sing-along refrains served up with a polite sneer and rock 'n' roll attitude dosed with a Merseybeat middle-eight. Ear worms are back.

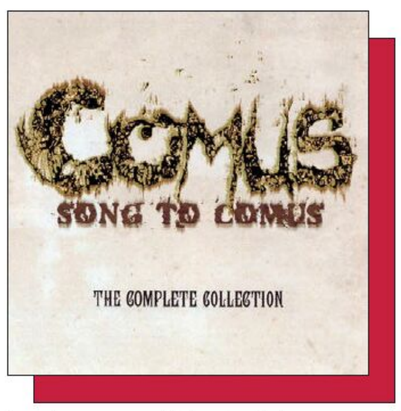
Available on: Buy This Now! (CURATION LP)



STEPPENWOLF
The Pusher

Although originally appearing on Steppenwolf's 1968 self-titled debut album and also released as a 45, the band's transformation of Hoyt Axton's 'The Pusher' into a Nam-era counterculture classic is arguably best remembered for its appearance on the following year's *Easy Rider* soundtrack. Clocking in at little short of the six-minute mark Steppenwolf's moodily widescreen re-imagining of the song offers a dragging tempo, wailing guitar lines, ghostly surges of Hammond and John Kay's unforgettable vocal performance, providing the perfect audio framework for Hoyt Axton's enduringly resonant lyrics. "God damn the pusher man!'"

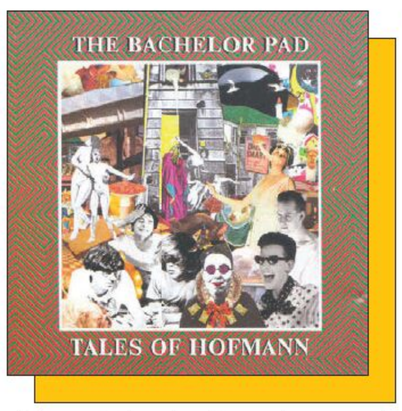
Available on: Easy Rider: Music From The Soundtrack (MCA LP)



COMUS
Children Of The Universe

To Keep From Crying found chief songwriter Roger Wootton eschewing the nightmarish pagan sounds of the band's debut in favour of a more commercial style, but the album was loathed both by Comus's small scattering of fans and later by Wootton himself. It has its fair share of howlers, so on one hand, fair enough. But on the other, it has the soaring 'Children Of The Universe', a gloriously overblown and unabashed pop song that retains the bonkers vocal blend of the guttural Wootton and the glass-worryingly shrill Bobbie Watson that made the debut so memorable. Put it on and prepare to be uplifted.

Available on: Songs To Comus: The Complete Collection (SANCTUARY 2-CD)



THE BACHELOR PAD
I Want To Hold Your Head

Short-lived they may have been but Glasgow quintet The Bachelor Pad were together long enough to record this slice of DIY psychedelia found on their sole LP from 1990. It's a heady, swirly affair that references The Beatles in its title and Bowie in its fade-out. The band started out in the C86 fanzine scene but had collective influences that reached back through Buzzcocks to Barrett. (And plenty of acts that didn't start with B!) Like all the best music, this track breaks down those pesky tribal barriers; indie kids, punks, hippies, and psych fiends will find common ground here.

Available on: Tales Of Hofmann (IMAGINARY LP)

COSMETIQUE
A Kiss A Kiss

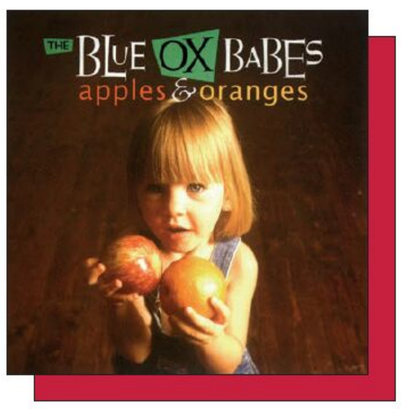
If you hung out at the infamous 333 Club/Mother Bar in Hoxton in the late '90s you probably heard Justin Anderson and Sarah Churchill deejaying the night away. They then went off and recorded a quirky Lady Di novelty single and two albums of "dark electro (Brit) pop" before separating. Churchill also sang on the title track of Saint Etienne's *Finisterre* album which may have influenced this gorgeous gurgling girl-group groover featuring her Sarah Cracknell meets Debbie Harry cooing that's guaranteed to melt hearts at 100 paces.

Available on: The Lace And The Longing (BLOW UP LP)

PREWAR YARDSALE
Love

You know what goes well with these late summer evenings when days get shorter and autumnal melancholy quietly looms on the horizon? Small but juicy bites of sweet lo-fi. Prewar Yardsale, the duo of Dina Levy and Michael Rechner, make the kind of music that lets not only instruments and hushed vocals but air and ambience too, have a say on what the mic captures. Their new Bandcamp single is a friendly, warm caress that sits somewhere between C86, Daniel Johnston and Beat Happening. With its minimal strums and romantic melodicism, 'Love' gets stuck in your head while putting a smile on your face.

Available on: Love/Happy Girl Friday (BANDCAMP)



THE BLUE OX BABES
Russia In Winter

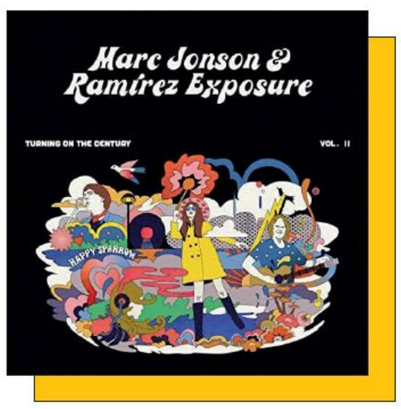
The Blue Ox Babes were founded in 1981 by former Dexys Midnight Runner Kevin Archer, who decided to incorporate a Celtic folk sound into his new band's music and dress them Romany style. Unfortunately, he played some of his material to old bandmate Kevin Rowland, who promptly nicked Archer's musical and sartorial ideas and released the multi-million selling *Too-Rye-Ay*. One track beyond Rowland's fiendish grasp, however, was the gorgeous instrumental 'Russia In Winter', featuring sterling work from Spiders drummer Woody Woodmansey and keyboard legend Vincent Crane. Simultaneously epic and reflective, this track defies its title by brimming with nuanced warmth.

Available on: Apples & Oranges (CHERRY RED CD)

BARBARA & ERNIE
Play With Fire

The names Barbara and Ernie don't prepare you for the lush, melodious sound that hits when you drop the needle on the duo's 1971 long-player *Prelude To*. Although Barbara Maffey was once backing singer for Hendrix and jazz-guitarist Ernie Calabria earnt his stars with Nina Simone, neither had done much in their own right before the advent of this unlikely but fascinating pairing. *Prelude To* is a hidden gem and opener 'Play With Fire' a psych-folk-funk classic. Channelling Julie Driscoll, Maffey's languorous vocal intro blends into the song's infectious chorus, while delicate brass cajoles the track towards its orchestral crescendo. Three and a half minutes of unutterable joy.

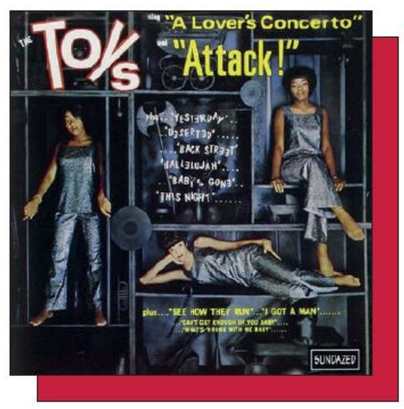
Available On: Prelude To... (COTILLION LP)



MARC JONSON & RAMÍREZ EXPOSURE
Happy Sparrow (In The Rain)

Marc Jonson and Victor Ramírez's second album includes a wealth of great songs. Yet there's something about 'Happy Sparrow (In The Rain)' (as well as the set-closing reprise) that successfully pinpoints the sense of joy and occasion these music makers bring to the table. Despite the bleak, melancholic, sentiment that often surrounds musings of precipitation, Jonson and Ramírez infuse their notion with wide-eyed wonder, the swooning guitars, vocals, keyboards and percussion creating a cornucopia of bright, sunshine-pop sounds.

Available on: Turning On The Century Vol II
(KOOL KAT MUSIC/HURRAH MUSIC CD)



THE TOYS
May My Heart Be Cast Into Stone

Sandy Linzer and Denny Randell wrote and produced a string of early to mid-60s singles for the likes of The Four Seasons, Jay & The Techniques and The Cyrkle; their work with NYC girl group The Toys, specifically 'A Lover's Concerto' and 'Attack!', took their complex, layered arrangements into the US and UK charts. April 1966's 'May My Heart Be Cast Into Stone' may not have scaled such heights but remains a startling piece of booming East Coast soul-pop, its solid beat, rich brass arrangement and red-hot production proving the perfect foil for Barbara Harris's defiant lead and Barbara Parritt and June Montiero's vocal support.

Available on: The Toys Sing "A Lover's Concerto" And "Attack!"
(SUNDAZED CD)

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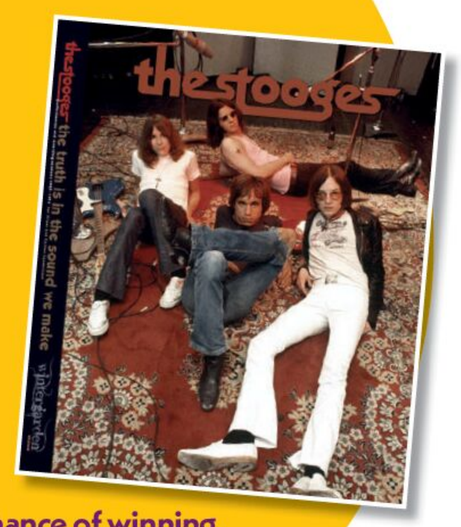

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it's a **happening** thing

Retail Therapy

LA-based quartet **UNI BOYS**' latest album *Buy This Now!* is an antidote to the testing times we're living through, full of the innocence and thrills of youthful, carefree hot summers.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS tells the story so far

It's safe to say that something of a "Yoofquake" has been bubbling up in the States. Taking cues from the always somewhat volatile Foxygen, New York's The Lemon Twigs soon fathomed out their own path, and are now kicking up a storm as an assured powerpop band, taking all of the best bits from the mid-60s through to the skinny tied late '70s and early '80s. It's this stylistic that has gained traction in Los Angeles, where Billy Tibbals, more on him next issue, and Uni Boys are further elements to this growing renaissance.

Fifteen-year-old SoCal school friends, Noah Nash and Reza Matin, recruited Arthur Fitch on drums to become Uniform. The name later naturally shortened to Uni Boys. Just as The Korgis stemmed from Stackridge, the Boys seemingly evolved in "real '70s time". Matin told *The Big Takeover*, "We got into bands like Mahavishnu Orchestra, but we took a different route when we started listening to Canterbury scene bands like Soft Machine. Then we transitioned into more structured powerpop stuff. We were looking for obscure bands that only put out, like, one seven inch, just sending each other stuff… it definitely influenced our writing."

The trio gigged heavily across the Orange County area, honing their sound and identity, until COVID put an end to playing live. Across lock down two home-recorded albums were self-released. *Heavy Hearted* and *Rock 'n' Roll Music* are snotty efforts, but you can hear the touchstones. Brent Rademaker of Curation was soon introduced to the boys and was smitten.

Like all bad kids in bands from the Cali suburbs, Uni Boys soon moved to The City Of Angels, seeking bright lights and thrills after the pandemic had levelled off. Rademaker had offered to issue their two digital albums, but the band, now with the addition of bassist Michael Cipolletti, recorded a fresh new album for the label. "Reza did all of the recording and mixing," explains Nash. "It has a unique sound and we're satisfied with the outcome. Brent gave us opportunities that we would have never had without him and helped us move up to the next level whilst giving us full control in the sound of the album."

And word got out. *Do It All Next Week* was released in September 2022 and bottles up enough *Yellow Pills* affectations

Relaxo Rancho: Uni Boys. L-R: Michael Cipolletti, Rexa Matin, Noah Nash, Arthur Fitch

"[The Lemon Twigs] are the most talented musicians we know and brought a lot to the table when producing us"

to resurrect Greg Shaw. "We had played a fair amount in LA prior to meeting Brent," says Nash, "but things definitely started to pick up after he put our record out." Dates with The Lemon Twigs, Black Crowes, and heroes Flamin' Groovies followed. Along with the mentioned Billy Tibbals and Tchotchke, the Uni Boys seemed to be at the heart of something that in part owed to the Twigs and Groovies, two generations of powerpop aesthetes. "LA has a million different 'scenes' and our little scene that has formed (or is forming) is just a subset of a much larger one," states Nash sagely. It has to be said though, the 24-year-old Uni Boys reclaiming the innocent and positive spirit of the music of their forefathers, somehow fits the moment we are living in; adding a little hope and fun to these dour days. "We're obviously greatly inspired by music from the '70s and '80s," he continues. "I don't find myself all that enamoured with growing up in that time period, though I'm sure Reza wouldn't mind. Things like film, music, and clothing have led me to romanticise those decades. Nonetheless, the same goes for the decades prior to those."

After higher level shows and a growing fan base, a new album is about to drop. And this is where we return to The Lemon Twigs. "We chatted with them a bit online," says Nash of the Fab Two. "Then, close to a year ago," he recently told Remember The Lightning, "they were spending some time in LA. Reza and the rest of the band met up with them at Footsies (a bar in the Cypress Park neighbourhood) after one of our shows. They eventually asked us to come record, seemingly pretty casually, and we jumped at the chance and asked if they would want to do our whole record. We spent a bit of time with them during their later trips to LA after that, and that was it. A session was planned."

The Californians then flew to New York and settled down in the brothers' Brooklyn studio in East Williamsburg. "We love their Dad Ronnie's music as well!" adds Nash concerning the gifted D'Addario family. "They're the most talented musicians we know and brought a lot to the table when producing us. We showed up with every song fully structured already, but they helped a ton with layering keys, background vocals, and producing the album in general. They took our songs to a new level and we couldn't be happier with the turnout. We're so grateful to have worked with them!"

Buy This Now! is a brilliant album that sounds like Uni Boys in a more stripped back and teen-orientated mode. Much of it is reminiscent of how bands like Squire and The Rubinoos caught the innocence of the mid-60s in the nihilistic punk era. Brian and Michael, instead of casting their influence all over the record, add subtle musical and vocal nuances. Rather than swamp the productions, these add appropriate and non-showy flair. It's so carefully done that you won't think Lemon Twigs, but their fairy dust has truly been sprinkled.

Those of you lucky enough to have caught the brothers D'Addario on their recent tour will have noticed the tall, curly haired, Reza Matin moving between bass, guitar and drums, as he's now a member of their touring band. And very good he was too.

A scene is definitely shaping up, centred around a close coterie of talented players, and it's an absolute joy to witness. Buy this record. Go and see them live. We could all do with some high-spirited pop to add needed cheer.

Buy This Now! is out now on Curation

The History Boy

THOMAS WALSH led Pugwash through seven acclaimed albums of cerebral songcraft while co-captaining cricket-centric pop duo The Duckworth Lewis Method with Neil Hannon and collaborating with the likes of Andy Partridge, Eric Matthews and Jason Falkner.

As his much-anticipated first solo album hits the airwaves, Walsh waxes lyrical about some of the sounds that fed into its creation

SCOTT TRUSTY
I Bred Quarter Horses
(A-side, Big Tree, 1970)

Michael Brown, the erstwhile genius behind The Left Banke and Montage, thought for about 90 seconds in 1970 about a whole new musical genre. "Countrypsychamericanabubblepop". Clearly that snappy genre title never caught on (because I just made it up) but what in God's own epithet did he conjure up at the height of the prog era? A truly glorious, one-off, cinematic piece of ramshackle country-pop, held together by Scott Trusty's "ridin' the rails" vocals, and all tied up in a bow that Brian Wilson would've worn with pride. This is the jigsaw piece with the entire face of the Mona Lisa that's been missing from the world of popular music all this time.

SEAN O'HAGAN
Spoken Gem
(From *Radum Calls, Radum Calls*, Drag City LP, 2019)

I got through lockdown by listening to *McCartney 3*, Elliott Smith and Sean O'Hagan. I wrote the songs for my first upcoming album during this time too. And apart from the obvious genius of all three of these artists, I think I may have subconsciously gone down the solo route because of Sean's *Radum Calls, Radum Calls*. The man is truly phenomenal. Whatever he does is dipped in perfection and this track, with the added emotion of Cathal Coughlan sounding like an angel with attitude, is just one of the highlights of this spellbinding record.

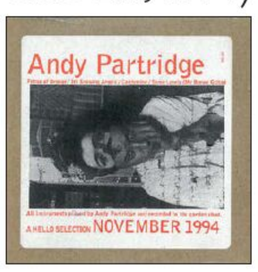
ELLIOTT SMITH
LA
(From *Figure 8*, DreamWorks LP, 2000)

So, Elliott Smith. I got him. I liked him. I was saddened by his strange demise. But I never listened to him. Truly listened. Then, one night, in the atrial fibrillated beating heart of lockdown, I remembered this track. From the far reaches of my subconscious I thought, "That was a good song." So off I went to Apple Music and roughly three months later I awoke after completely absorbing the man's music 24/7. I'd wake up humming his songs and they wouldn't leave my fucking head. But this newfound treasure of melody and prose was pushing life's realities out of my cheesebox, so I let it overstay its welcome like a landlord with Macca as his non-paying tenant. What an artist and what a loss.

JOHN LENNON
Watching The Wheels
(From *Double Fantasy*, Geffen LP, 1980)

When I'm in the writing/demo zone there's really only one person who occupies my musical and creative thoughts and it's John. Whether it's "Bermuda John", "Dakota John", "Fab John", "Activist John", "Rocker John", "Witty John" or just plain old beautiful John, he's the king that sits at my capo-shaped throne. And 'Watching The Wheels' grows even more meaningful, more poignant, and more melodically unsurpassed with every passing year. There was Shakespeare and there was Lennon.

ANDY PARTRIDGE
Prince Of Orange
(From *Andy Partridge*, Hello Recording Club EP, 1994)



If anyone is lurking behind that throne with Ron Nasty sitting on it, it's my old friend and fidus Achates Andy Partridge. I've figured out that what Andy has "discarded" over the years, songwise, would have made four Talking Heads, three REMs, a plethora of Blurs and 6.5 billion Oasises in the laboratory of pop. And that's without mentioning the whole west wing of "Beefhearts". This track will never cease to blow my clock weights off and it's not on YouTube, so dig out those Fuzzy Warbles, people.

ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA
Stranger On A Quiet Street
(From *Zoom*, Epic LP, 2001)

Pop perfection from another buddy of mine (I tell the local butcher in Ardee, where I live in Ireland, that Jeff Lynne is my mate, and he doesn't even know who The Pope is. That's how flagrantly proud I am of that fact). Two Thousand And One turned out to be the end of life as we knew it, so Jeff choosing that particular time to re-emerge gave *Zoom* zero chance. But it's a pop song masterpiece and the old Brummie Aviator never sounded as at peace with a melody as on this stunner.

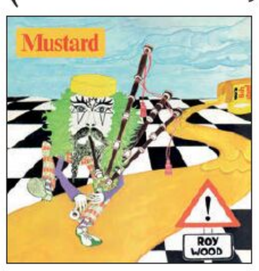
JETHRO TULL
Wond'ring Again
(From *Living In The Past*, Chrysalis LP, 1972)

The way I write is the complete opposite to my aul mucker in cricket-pop Neil Hannon. I can hate the guitar with a vitriol that would normally be reserved for people who overprice vinyl online, as opposed to the national (express)

"I wake up, during this time of musical industrial action, and I NEED to play it straight away. It's got a melody and structure that I've been unable to shake since I was a young teenager"

treasure that is Mr H, who writes pretty much every day, come rain, hail or dogs. So, music, in all its forms, I can easily live without for whole swathes of time. But… this song by the Tull. I wake up, during this time of musical industrial action, and I NEED to play it straight away. It's got a melody and structure that I've been unable to shake since I was a young teenager. I know it's not on *Benefit* but it's "BenefiTull" as far as I'm concerned.

ROY WOOD
Why Does Such A Pretty Girl Sing Those Sad Songs
(From *Mustard*, Jet LP, 1975)



My hero. My inspiration. Oh my. I tried desperately to put on a major tribute to Roy in LA through my dear friends out there and The Wild Honey Foundation, which raises funds for autism and puts on tribute shows like NO ONE ELSE. This year is the 50th anniversary of Roy's greatest ever year in music. When he basically ruled the pop roost like a max factor brontosaurus raging through the charts as Wizzard, solo, and as Santa Claus. Plus, he was in the West End in *Tommy*, dating Lyndsey De Paul, and writing for Elvis and The Everly Brothers. Twelve months. Ninetten-Seventy-Three. The year of the Wizzard. Yet nothing to commemorate this anywhere. Personally, Roy owes me and everyone else in this world nothing, but we got close. Joe Elliott, Rick Nielson, and Al Jardine couldn't sway Roy, so I had NO CHANCE. I'm just a fan, but I love him – I always will – and we have the music, such as this ode to Mr Wilson which was to be found hidden away in mustard in '75. Perfection from the master.

ELLI
Never Mind
(A-side, Parlophone, 1967)

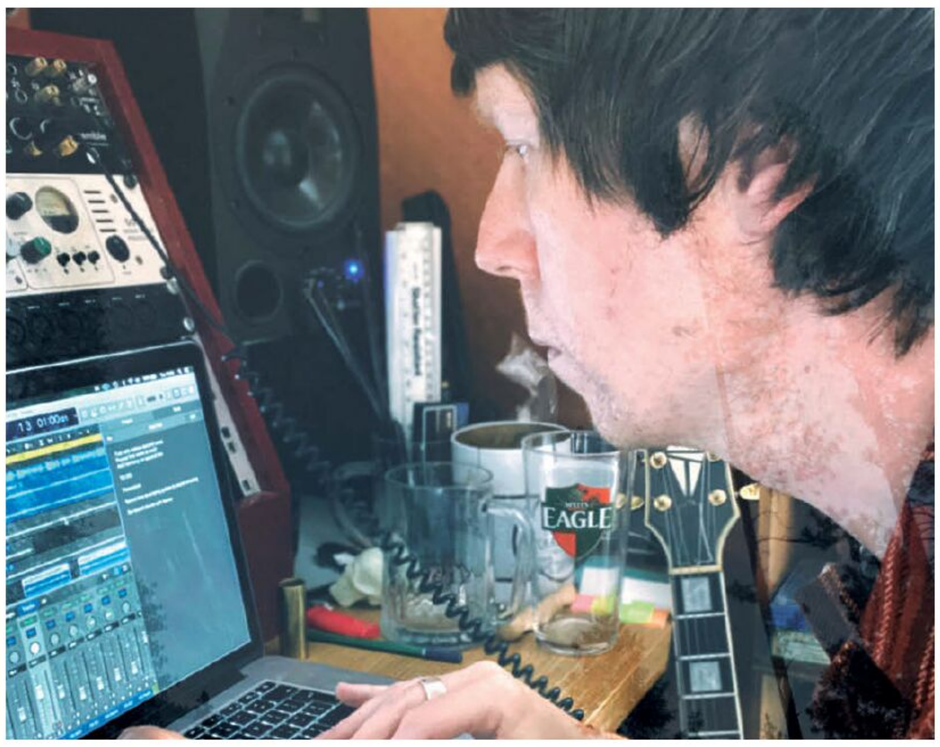
I've been obsessed with finding a copy of this single for two decades now but there's been more sightings of Donald Trump's conscience than there has of dear old Elli (misspelled as Eli on the promos). Again, when I find myself in the creative position, songs like this can inspire me as much as the so-called greats can. How a tune as magical and inventive as this, released on the same label AND in the same week as the fabs romped around a field of strawberries and went sticking their fingers in a few fishy pies on Penny Lane, could die so spectacularly on its arse, always gives me inspiration. "How?", you may ask. Well, it just proves that nobody has the first fucking clue about what's good or what's not in music. Which means we ALL have a chance.

Thomas Walsh in his natural habitat: Abbey Road Studio 2
PHOTO: BEN MEADOWS

THE KINKS
See My Friends
(A-side, Pye, 1965)

"Bless me father for I have sinned. It's been six years since my last album…" That became the working title for my new album as I've never had such a long gap between making these noises and squeaks we call ditties. But the person/band who have always kept me in the game are Ray Davies and The Kinks. They never let you down. Even *Low Budget* I can forgive; that's how much I love them. And this song. If I was asked today, "What is my favourite modern pop single of all time?", I'd proudly say, 'See My Friends'. How does a record from 1965 have an intro as fucking glorious as this? And then in comes Ray singing like nobody before or since. Ray asked Pugwash to be the house band in when he was going to bring *Village Green Preservation Society* to the stage with himself and special guests at every show. We collectively yellowed our unders. We rehearsed. It didn't happen. Who cares? Ray asked us. Me, Tosh, Joey and Shaun. All working-class guys, three dubs and a scouser. That may be our proudest ever moment and the reason why we still live hand to mouth for this profession. We love what it can potentially bring and tolerate what it actually gives us. I wouldn't want it any other way.

The Rest Is History is out on 28th October on Curation



Home alone. Jack in his studio and joined by Joe Woolley (bottom right)

White Horse

Jack Sharp returns with the second instalment of his **LARGE PLANTS** solo recordings made during our recent dark age. **JON 'MOJO' MILLS** talks barn-rock

"*The Thorn* was mostly recorded around the same time as *The Carrier*, so I feel like it provides a logical progression from the songs on that record," explains Jack Sharp about the 11 tracks which will be released later this year, once again on the formidable Ghostbox. "Since Wolf People went on hiatus, I've tried to make myself write and record as much as possible. When I came to put this album together, these were the songs that I felt fit best around the theme of the title track.

"This was mostly recorded in a barn outside my friend's house that has now been demolished. I tend to give myself ridiculous deadlines for finishing music anyway, but I had to record all the drums and guitars before the date they were due to knock the building down. It was a dirty, rusty, metal shack with no insulation or sound treatment, and it was full of junk, but it sounded weirdly great, and I loved it. I really miss working in there."

With some of the songs dating back to the debut and the remainder the following the year, the material works brilliantly as a body of songs. It could also be said that the darker folkier feel is perhaps closer to Wolf People than the fuzzy "biker-rock" of *The Carrier.* "That's cool that you can hear a through-line in the songs. I didn't write them specifically for the album but tried to choose songs that hung together well and created some kind of arc. I'm still a fan of albums and I will totally obsess over the sequencing. This album has definitely got a more organic, folk-rock vibe happening.

"I have tried to ignore the Wolf People thing and not let it affect my writing and playing, because I think it would limit me to actively push that influence down. I learnt so much from being in that band, and especially from Joe Hollick's playing. And I I can't deny that I prefer a sound that is from a particular time too. It's less nostalgia, more that I just think drums and guitars sound better played and recorded a certain way. Another huge influence on me, more recently, has been playing guitar with Paul Osborne's Project Gemini. I have been playing live with them and also providing some guitar for upcoming recordings too. It's been great to just be a player in someone else's band, and I've learnt loads from it. Paul, Tony and Bert are all incredible players as well, so it's been a challenge keeping up!"

Now that Large Plants are a regular gigging band with Joe Woolley (guitar), Paul Milne (bass/vocals) and Itmar Rubinger (drums), *Shindig!* eagerly await the fruits of these labours and new new influences, until then enjoy this rather fantastic collection of dark, progressive folk-rock that started the ball rolling.

The Thorn is out in November on Ghost Box. The launch show is at The Grace, London on 25th November

Finding The Fourth Voice

Discodelic soul? It's a cute tag but doesn't begin to describe **SAY SHE SHE**'s eclecticism, as **CAMILLA AISA** discovers

It would be a pitch-perfect (pun intended) premise for a movie. Two singers, Piya Malik and Sabrina Mileo Cunningham, living in the same Lower East Side tenement building. "She moved into the apartment above me,", Sabrina remembers, "thin doors, thin walls, you could hear everything. My first encounter with her was hearing her singing through the floorboards." They immediately caught each other's attention. "I knew there was a singer that lived downstairs who did her warm-ups very early in the morning." Impressed by what she was hearing, Sabrina eventually decided to leave some Christmas cookies – and a note – at her mysterious neighbour's front door. London-born Piya was then a backing vocalist with another gifted singer, Nya Gazelle Brown. They'd bumped into each other at a party on a Harlem rooftop. "Within two minutes of knowing each other we started singing. Pya used to wear this little harmonica around her neck. In between her singing she would lift her little necklace up and start playing that darn harmonica," laughs Nya.

As a true New York happy ending would dictate, friendship and music instantly collided. Say She She was born. Brought together by a genre-defying love of music, a steadfast refusal to be typecast and proud political consciousness, in just two years the band has produced a handful of infectious singles and two albums. New full-length *Silver* finds them channelling voracious, all-embracing listening habits into their most ambitious and rewarding work yet.

"Our dream is that you would walk into a record shop and find a Say She She record in multiple areas," Piya proudly states. There's a strong psychedelic element, as well as a willingness to reclaim the celebratory power of disco ("If you don't like disco then there's gotta be something wrong with you," they all agree). As catchy and retrodelic as they can be, the songs of Say She She speak loudly to and of today, eagerly blending groove and politics. "Music is our most powerful voice," Piya considers. "We don't want to do things in isolation. Whenever we're sad or happy, the first thing we do is express it through music – why wouldn't we want to share that?"

"We're unafraid and unabashed to express ourselves," adds Nya. "And it's because we've created this safe space for us to be ourselves. I think that comes out in the music." Whether it's defying genre boundaries or taking a stand, Say She She can count on the power of three. "We call it the fourth voice," Sabrina enthuses. "Three different tones and textures blending into one, it's another sound in and of itself."

Silver is out on 29th September on Colemine

"Our dream is that you would walk into a record shop and find a Say She She record in multiple areas"

Say She She *c'est la chic*! L-R: Piya Malik, Sabrina Mileo Cunningham, Nya Gazelle Brown

Ersatz Entertainment

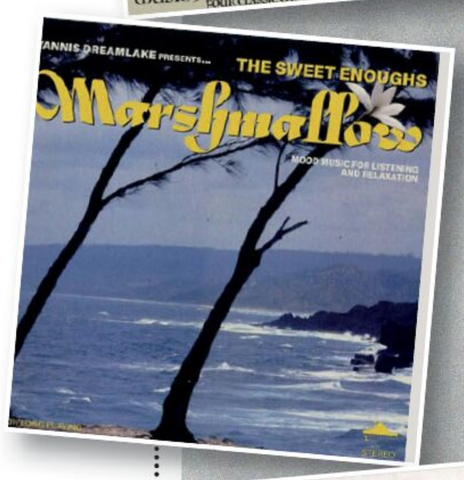
Do we detect an exotica/lounge revival in the air? **ANDY MORTEN** follows the sounds emanating from the quiet village and wonders, why now?

While recently immersing himself in *Lounge Psychédélique*, the third volume in Two-Piers' excellent series of themed compilation albums, this writer was also confronted by an anthology of "father of Exotica" Martin Denny's late '50s albums, a vinyl edition of Australian aggregation The Sweet Enoughs' 2020 album *Marshmallow*, and details of new music from Swedish artists Sven Wunder and Ìxtahuele, whose music proudly sports the influence of lounge music's late '50s golden age.

"Spencer [Hickman, Death Waltz Recording Co] and I had wanted to do a lounge and exotica compilation for ages," begins Two-Piers' Mark McQuillan. "We both love the music and whenever you deejay it out it goes down so well. We knew we could create a fun album that music lovers both young and old would dig. Also having all the tracks on one handy LP makes it super useful for your deejay box and playing at home when friends come round. We want to introduce people to these amazing artists and help them take a dive into the world of lounge and exotica. We also love the fact bands like Los Bitchos are championing the genre right now and doing it in such a cool way." Indeed, *Lounge Psychédélique* blithely blends legends like Denny, Les Baxter, Yma Sumac and Arthur Lyman with flag-wavers like Pizzicato Five, The Bongolian and Íxtahueles.

"As the earth grows smaller and we find ourselves bombarded with hostilities, the need for exoticism and mysticism grows stronger. Exotica is gaining new recruits at a steady pace," states Stefan Kéry, head honcho of Ìxtahuele's label Subliminal Sounds. "The exotic sounds of Ìxtahuele are more than the pulsating pleasure of a musical trip around palm trees, warm ocean currents, coral reefs and grass-skirted loveliness. It's a kiss-covered call to dip deep in the charm and sounds of love gone native." Ìxtahuele's music also soundtracks 2020 film *Cane Fire*, which examines the past and present of the Hawaiian island of Kauai.

"I'm grateful to live and work in this new era of lounge and easy-listening music," Sven Wunder tells us, "Reviving the golden age of recording and the art of composing," while John Henrickson, who co-founded Piano Piano Records with Wunder, sums up the current mood. "I mean, we're living in a time with listening lounges popping up all over the globe with Khruangbin chords coming from the hi-fi speakers. That's another sign that something's going on, more than just a coincidence."



Deep Exotica: Music From Martin Denny's Lush Lounge compiler Dave Henderson agrees. "Contemporary music remains fashioned by the past," he tells us. "This year's rave revival followed last year's re-imagining of post-punk. Set against a backdrop of homogenous generic radio play and the indie revivalism from 6Music, the counterbalance of nexotica, sleazy-listening and off-kilter trad-jazz seems to be emerging as a form of pure escapism."

The Sweet Enoughs, whose *Marshmallow* has just been issued on vinyl for the first time, said of the record, "[It] feels like the entirely appropriate time to make this dreamlike record of soft warm breezes, mysterious bird calls, starlit pools in which lovers swim, a castaways hermitage transcribed on palm fronds and sent in a bottle across the distant waves to your golden shores." UK electro-psych-rockers Temples coyly titled their 2023 album *Exotico* and curated a Qobuz playlist populated by Denny, Baxter, Francis Lai and other sounds intended to evoke "lost Pacific islands, distant shores, open topped car rides, lonely surfers and heartbroken crooners".

Looks like the flood gates are well and truly open. Make mine a Mauna Kea please – heavy on the gold rum!

Martin Denny, the godfather of exotica; recent lounge-centric releases old and new

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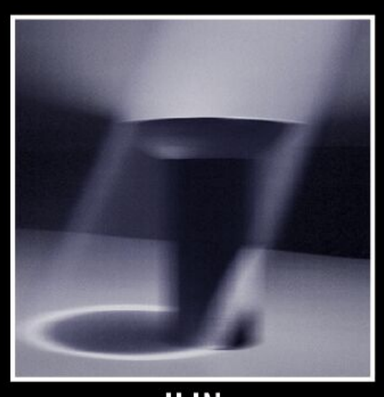
Languid & enjoyably disjointed, Loraine James' unusual musical settings draw out sensitive & reflexive performances, criss-crossing watery ambience with denatured rhythm & asmr beats, delivering a totally unique vision of electronic pop music.



JLIN
PERSPECTIVE
PLANET MU LP / CD

Jlin's new mini-album "Perspective" works as a catch-up for those wanting new music from her, and wanting to hear how her sound is evolving. Tune in. There's much more ahead.

BLACK MARKET BRASS
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Black Market Brass is proud to present Hox, their 3rd LP is a new take on afrobeat that combines traditional grooves with heavy, hypnotic, sci-fi sounds that reflect the band's myriad of influences as record collectors across genres.

THE ARMED
PERFECT SAVIORS
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The Armed return with their new album Perfect Saviors, the first new music since 2021 breakout release ULTRAPOP & featuring contributions from Julien Baker, Sarah Tudzin, Justin Meldal-Johnsen, Eric Avery, Stephen Perkins, Josh Klinghoffer and many more.

C.O.F.F.I.N
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Frenzied, high-voltage guitars, thumping rhythms & clever, captivating lyrics combine on 'Australia Stops', the hard-biting 5th studio album from Sydney punks C.O.F.F.I.N, channelling 1970's Australiana & boogie rock & roll

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GUM
SATURNIA
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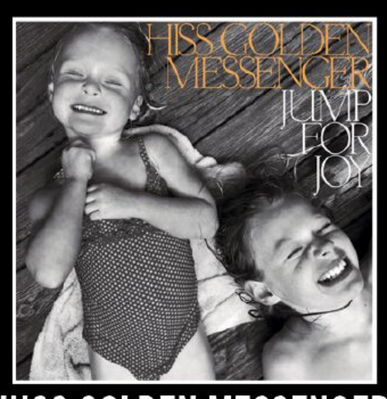
GUM (aka Jay Watson of Pond) has treated us to some of the most sonically diverse explorations of the past decade. On the new album Saturnia, these visions have coalesced into Watson's richest, most coherent to date.



HISS GOLDEN MESSENGER
JUMP FOR JOY
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"Something about Hiss Golden Messenger's music makes it feel like a golden-hued summer day even when it's not." —The New York Times

A GIANT DOG
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Pairing traditional spirituals & long-lost gospel classics with vintage soul & R&B tunes, they return with Echoes of the South, a collection as moving as it is timeless, transcending genre & era to touch something deep & fundamental about the human condition.

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ASHA WELLS
WATER WORDS
ROYAL OAKIE CD

Water Words is the debut album from non-binary artist Asha Wells, featuring atmospheric textures and haunting melodies set to thought provoking lyrics, calling to mind Kate Bush and Jeff Buckley.

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Familiar Unknown

TESS CARGES stares into the mirror with **REFLECTIVE DETECTIVES** front man Ryan Gabrinetti

"The whole thing started out as to see how long we could play without stopping," begins Reflective Detectives' leading man Ryan Gabrinetti, elaborating on their latest recording *Unknown Suite*. "Over time it took on a life of its own." Although the set was conceived as a stasis-fighting challenge during the pandemic, it swiftly became a contemplative piece on the private and public pull of life's many great unknowns. The group – Gabrinetti (guitars, bass, drums, keys, vocals), Cameron Burt (bass, French horn), Daniel Sunshine (drums) and Gil Young (electric guitar) – insists that *Unknown Suite* is intended to be played and heard in one go: no stops, no singles. As such, the tracks, though distinct from one another, blend seamlessly and return to familiar, pulsing motifs.

"Zappa's editing style was a big influence on the flow"

Based in LA, Reflective Detectives, true to their name, shine a spotlight on California's vibrant resurgence of psychedelia and all the existential dread, paranoia and glee that comes with it. As primary songwriter and producer, Gabrinetti pays homage to his idols. The album art was inspired by the cover of *The Family That Plays Together* by Spirit, a band Gabrinetti is currently writing a book about. As an avid researcher and music historian, he's quick to sing the praises of his predecessors, crediting Zappa with the idea for the suite. "Zappa's editing style was a big influence on the flow. Records like *We're Only In It For The Money* have this anarchic and unpredictable presentation that brings so many disparate elements together in a harmonious way." Reflective Detectives have done just that.

Their third album since 2016, *Unknown Suite* is the most contemplative and riotous piece yet. Though only six tracks long, the suite lands (and takes) a few punches, fighting any ego that pretends to escape the unknown. Gabrinetti speaks his mind in 'This Land': "Fuck off, just go back to the suburbs / You wined and you dined and you left us with the fat check / You bought and you sold our generation / Never worry, our kids will hate us too." Gabrinetti reflects on the root of the suite's anger and uncertainty. "I have always felt compelled to search for deeper meaning and understanding of self and humanity," he ruminates, "and I think the time we live in now is ripe for this kind of contemplation at scale: where we have been, where we are, where we are going."

Unknown Suite is available at reflectivedetectives.bandcamp.com

Refelecting our tastes: Ryan Gabrinetti

happening right now

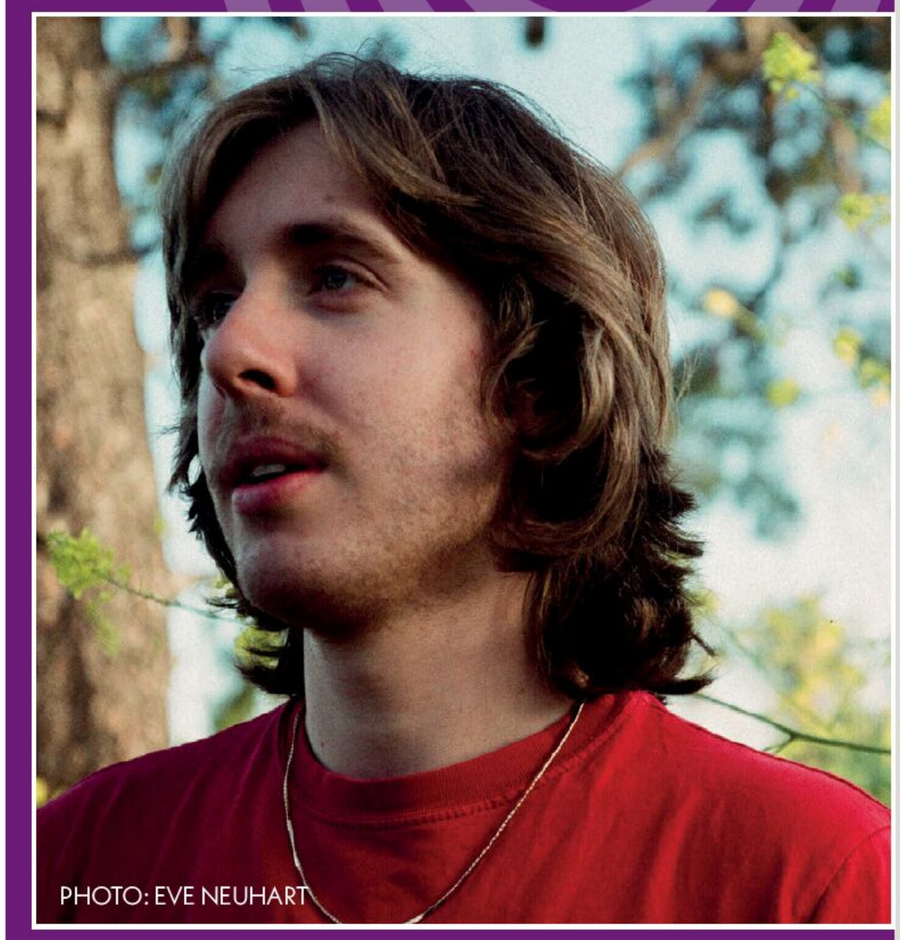

PHOTO: EVE NEUHART

Eternally Yours

A fictional singer comes to life as **ESSENTIAL FOREVER**

We've all done it. Rooted around in the bargain section of a record shop hoping to exhume an obscure gem. But what might happen if that experience inspired you to create the very kind of records for which you searched? Former Jungle Green member Al Heaney has fulfilled that wish with Essential Forever.

Following on from 2021's *There's Still A Lot To Say About Essential Forever* comes an eponymous second album that effortlessly fuses '60s chamber-pop with the Laurel Canyon sound that followed. Its 10 songs are soaring and expansive yet also personal and tender.

"Recording the album myself meant that a lot of the songs were written with certain sounds in mind," reflects Heaney from his current home in LA. His ambition was to balance the big production sound of pioneers such as Tom Wilson and Phil Spector with the lo-fi feel of home recording. "The goal was to find a sweet spot between old and new sounding, so that each song felt classical or timeless, but also intimate. You just try to get from all that heady stuff to something authentic and transporting for yourself and the listener."

All that riffling through old vinyl also led to discoveries that influenced Heaney's songwriting. The diverse array of records he's filtered through his own artistic vision include Donnie & Joe Emerson's *Dreamin' Wild* to Richie Valens' *Stay Beside Me* and the solitary self-titled 1968 album by Japanese musician Harumi.

Essential Forever is also lyrically ambitious, dealing literally and metaphorically "with love, fate, religion, relationships, human nature – all these things that we observe and process in life". According to Healey, the songs are "a collection of stories with varying perspectives, connecting those feelings to something larger". True to its title, the album uses individual experience to shine a light on the universal.

As told to Clive Webb

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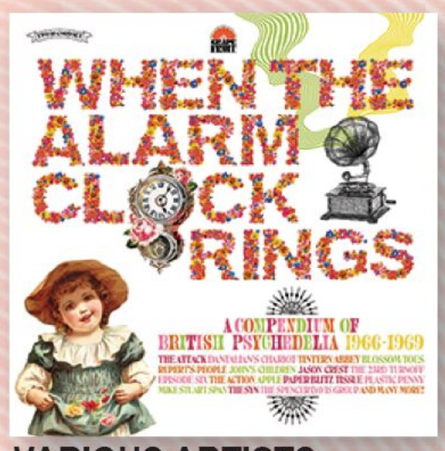

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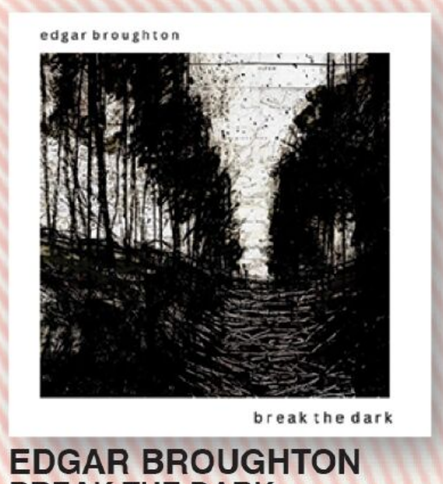

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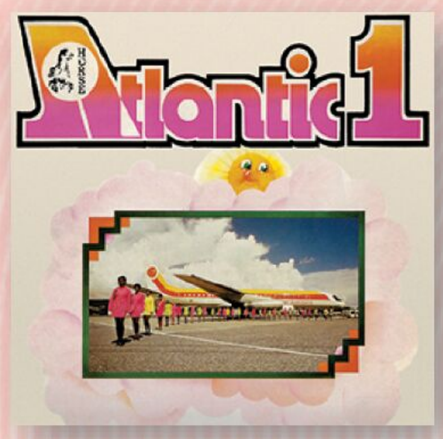

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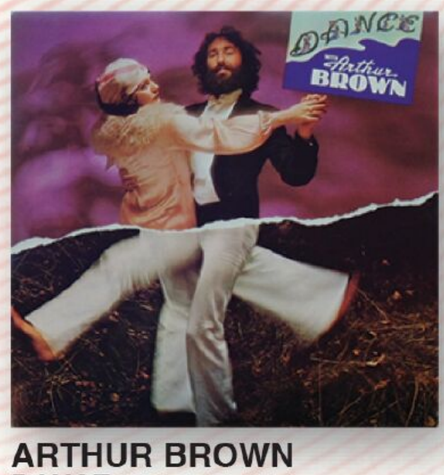

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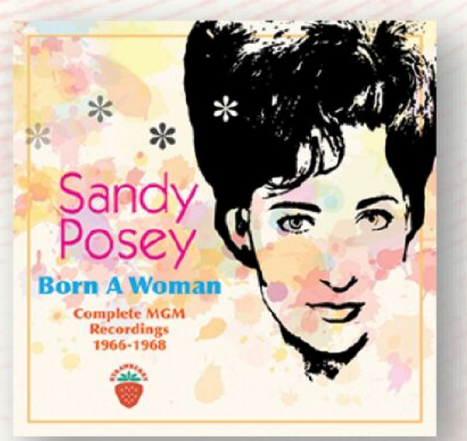

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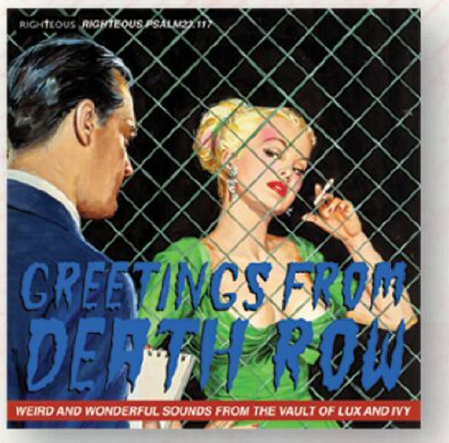

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New Reflections

Psychedelic football, sexed-up guitars and vintage sounds all helped shape **ADAM CAMM**'s new album. **DUNCAN FLETCHER** steps through the looking glass

"I like to write about characters in my songs," says Bristol-born, London-based musician Adam Camm about the inspirations behind his debut solo album *Mirror, Mirror*. "Sometimes they're based on my own experiences and emotions. *Mirror, Mirror* reflects those emotions and traits. What do you see, and what does everyone else see?"

Mirror, Mirror sets modern day concerns against music influenced by '60s psych, glam, and '70s art-rock, Adam's taste having been formed by his father's record collection, along with a love of the more lysergic-leaning bands from the Britpop era. "Bands like Oasis, Super Furry Animals and Kula Shaker, amongst others, that had a psychedelic side. I sort of worked my way backwards from there… All my favourite artists had a psychedelic phase – The Beach Boys, Stones, Beatles, Who – and they all approached it in different ways. That's what I like about psych, there are commonalities, but you can do it differently enough to make it your own."

Shindig! asks if Adam has a go-to instrument for songwriting and what instrumentation he used on the album. "After many years using just a guitar, I started using other instruments to write with. I've always enjoyed writing using a bass because you don't think of chords but more in a groove fashion. 'Devil In The Detail' started off like that. As for the instrumentation, I used a lot of mellotrons, synths and transistor organs alongside the traditional drum/bass/guitar set up. I managed to get a sitar sound by building something I named the 'Kama Sitar', basically an Epiphone Dot fixed with new electrics, pickups and a buzz bridge to give that electric sitar sound. I cut and pasted extracts from three editions of the Kama Sutra all over the body and headstock. My eBay search history that week was pretty interesting to say the least!"

Away from music Adam is a keen Bristol Rovers fan. Their strip features on the album sleeve, and Adam's tracks have been played at their ground prior to matches. Does that make Rovers the most psych-friendly team in the league? "Watching Rovers win 7-0 on the last day of the season to snatch a promotion place a couple of years back was a pretty psychedelic moment! Not sure it makes them psych-friendly, but it did inspire 'Feel The Fuzz'. Lance, the resident Rovers deejay supports new music, so I've had a couple of great moments hearing my songs played before the game. Now I've represented Rovers, the next stage is to get that cap for England!"

Mirror, Mirror is out now via adamcamm.com

Adam Camm: "Who's the fairest of them all?"

hear & now

Kitchen sink pop bard **VINNY PECULIAR** shares his current fave raves

LISTENING (OLD)

I have proper soft spot for Be Bop Deluxe. *Futurama* is their second album, stuffed full of spidery riffs and futuristic references. Bill Nelson's astounding guitar work is like a second voice, layering and shaping every nuance. 'Maid In Heaven' was the anthem of my adolescence and I'm a sucker for teenage nostalgia. I return to marvel at it on a regular basis. I've also been exploring The Chocolate Watchband, Grateful Dead and Quicksilver Messenger Service with latent hippy intent.

LISTENING (NEW)

I recently got into The Lemon Twigs. They're a band that do rock 'n' roll pastiche like no other and I tip my hat to their fearless plagiarism. They genuinely sound like a band out of time, like they're like America's answer to Denim (I'm a huge Lawrence fan). Also taking my breath away is *Live At Bush Hall* by Black Country, New Road. They remind me of early Belle & Sebastian with added jazz operatic flare and symphonic intimacy. Freedom of expression never felt so fearless, and so alive.

READING

Complicated Game: Inside The Songs Of XTC has Todd Bernhardt questioning Andy Partridge on the stories behind many of the XTC classics. There are some lovely flights of fanciful analysis and genuine soul searching, Andy is impeccably entertaining, informative, and funny throughout. I've also just re-read *The Outsider* by Albert Camus, such a powerful work of emotional disassociation it still feels ahead of its time. Robert Smith cited the Camus influence in an *NME* interview in 1979 and I duly followed his lead. That's how we did it back then.

VIEWING

I really enjoyed *Somebody Somewhere*, a beautiful sitcom-drama set in rural Kansas. It's incredibly moving, looks amazing, the fields and farmlands of rural Kansas take centre stage. It's a slow-paced, character-driven show of day-to-day struggles and oddball friendships. In mood it feels a bit like an American *Detectorists*: funny, poignant and life affirming. Re-watching *Paris, Texas* I'd almost forgotten what an immersive, emotional experience it is, the reconnection of mother and son, an emotionally desolate Travis, and the young boy's performance kills me every time. In a good way.

As told to Andy Morten

How I learned To Love The Freaks is out on 15th September on Shadrack & Duxbury

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Sauveur Mallia finds his space

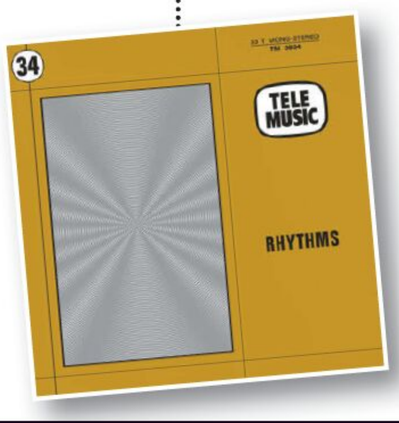
Turn On The Tele

As choice albums from acclaimed production music library **TELE MUSIC** enjoy their first ever release outside France, **ANDY MORTEN** enjoys a quiet walk around the library

Since its inception in 1966, Paris-based Tele Music has recorded hundreds of hours of high-end production music, earning itself a reputation on a par with UK libraries like KPM and De Wolfe. As library albums were never intended for public sale or consumption, many of them have become Holy Grails amongst collectors. Manchester label Be With is embarking on a mission to make highlights of the library available.

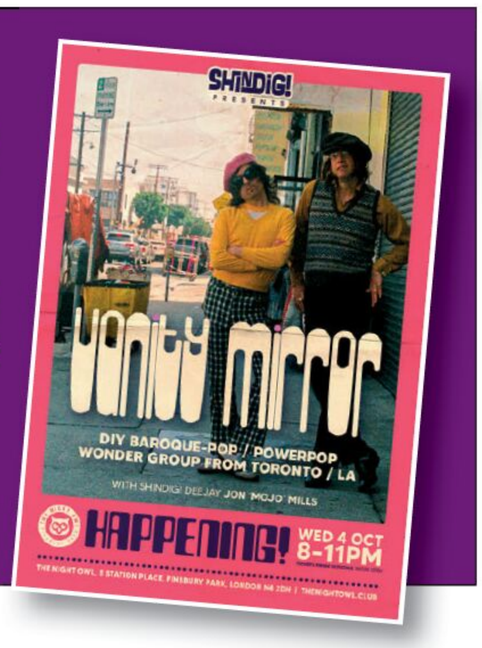
"From what I can glean," begins Be With head librarian Rob Butler, "Tele Music began on the budget-conscious fringes of the French production music scene after founder Roger Tokarz, a former home appliance salesman, negotiated a deal with studio owners for free monthly recording sessions. He soon built a sizable and now sought-after catalogue featuring, in addition to the usual TV cues, many notable soul, funk, and disco recordings.

Tele Music became known for its association with Voyage, the pop group composed of veteran session players that scored a string of dance hits in the late '70s. Prior to that, the library's better known and most desirable titles include, in Rob's words, "Anything that involves bass/synth-overlord Sauveur Mallia (*Spatial & Co, Swing Family*), Michel Goner's *Phasing News Volume 2* (though *Volume 1* is also excellent), Tonio Rubio's *Rhythms*, which is basically proto-hip-hop beat science, and then all the Pierre-Alain Dahan classics such as *Rythmiques* and *Neo Rythmiques*. Oh, and *Top Fiction* by Pierre Dutour, which contains some of the most startlingly beautiful songs you'll ever hear. Trust me!"



Eight Tele Music titles are out on 15th September on Be With

Patrons of The *Shindig!* Happening will know very well that our night is the first Friday of every month. A big thanks goes out to all of you who've come along. This October, however, we are also offering fans of the very best music something of a Happening Extra. On Wednesday 4th October, two nights ahead of our Happening with The Speedways, we'll be bringing to the stage the excellent Vanity Mirror. Electric Looking Glass's Brent Randall and Johnny Toomey will play an amalgam of lo-fi baroque powerpop with a full band for their debut, and one and only, UK show at London's The Night Owl. The duo's fab album *Puff* is required listening. Once you've heard it you'll definitely want to come. Two nights of decidedly different hues of the powerpop spectrum are guaranteed to lift your October. Don't miss.
bit.ly/3QBpvsy



good **news**

Arrow is fast becoming cult film fans' subscription TV platform of choice, its catalogue of under-the-radar titles – from '60s exploitation through '80s horror to modern-day weird-outs – and curated collections is constantly expanding. Catching *Shindig!*'s eye this month is the return of **RED SUN**, the lost 1971 "pop fantasy" starring real-life model and activist Uschi Obermaier that combines women's liberation commentary and psychedelic cartoon violence with radical results – especially for the men! The new print is vividly colourful and the soundtrack features '68 sounds by The Small Faces and The Nice.
arrow-player.com

BERT JANSCH would've been 80 on 3rd November and, to honour the occasion, Jansch bandmates, collaborators, fans and supporters including Bernard Butler, Brigid Mae Power, Jacqui McShee, Kathryn Williams, Martin Simpson and Robert Plant are presenting an evening of live music at The Royal Festival Hall in London's Southbank Centre (the location of Pentangle's inaugural live show in 1967) on Saturday 4th November. Stewart Lee comperes. Earth Recordings continues its Jansch vinyl reissue campaign with *Avocet*, *Edge Of A Dream* and *The Black Swan* on 27th October.
bertjansch.com

Reading matter for the autumn includes our own Simon Matthews' *Before It Went Rotten – The Music That Rocked London: 1972-76* (Oldcastle), a survey of the various ingredients that made up the buoyant London pub-rock scene. Jawbone's updated edition of Nina Antonio's '87 classic *In Cold Blood: Johnny Thunders – The Official Biography* will coincide with the 50th anniversary of The New York Dolls' debut. Last, but far from least, in 2024 Genesis will be publishing 500 copies of *The Beach Boys By The Beach Boys*. Pre-order as soon as you can.
oldcastlebooks.co.uk, jawbonepress.com, genesis-publications.com

As we enter the last quarter of the year (one in which there have been countless superb live shows), we want to flag up **DANIEL ROMANO'S OUTFIT**'s autumn tour. Kicking off last month in The Netherlands and currently swinging through Stockholm, Copenhagen, Groningen and Paris, Brits will be able to catch the Canadian wonders in Bristol, London and Brighton on the 15th, 16th and 17th September. Tickets are selling fast. See you down the front!
danielromanomusic.com

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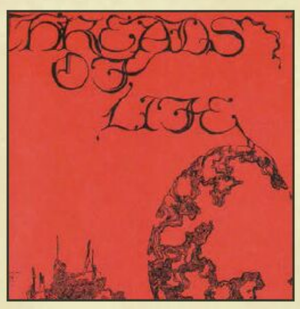

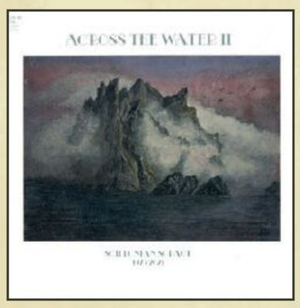

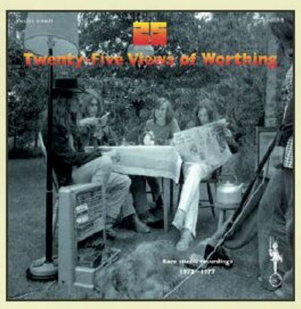

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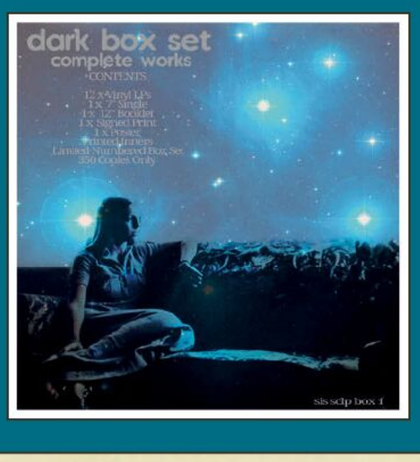

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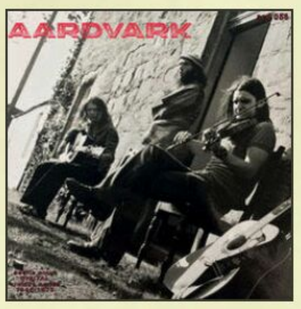

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what's in a **label?**

Instructions For Time Travellers

In 1971, **MARVELOUS KID** became the first Cornish group to play at a national festival.

MILLEN BROWN-EWENS revisits those halcyon days

The southern stretch of Cornwall's coast is extolled for many a treasure, yet few are wise to a burgeoning underground music scene that first laid it tracks in the early '70s. Riding the wave were a group of ambitious young musicians stirred by the scores of future prog-rock giants that passed through the evanescent Plymouth joint, The Van Dyke Club.

Bearing the name and American spelling of a minor character in a Rudyard Kipling story, the first iteration of Marvelous Kid – pulled together in 1970 and comprising of Tony Coxon on guitar, Steve Betts on keys and vocals, Paul Moon on drums and Nigel 'Spike' Hooper on bass and tenor sax – cut a stellar shape, delivering a heady brew of prog and jazz fusion that immediately set them apart from the commercially driven pop bands that frequented the working men's clubs of St Austell.

"What happened naturally was that we started writing our own material, which was relatively unusual," says Coxon. Amidst covers of Traffic songs and experiments with Terry Reid's Fantasia, Marvelous Kid were carving out their own sound. In the summer of '71, these tracks took the ensemble to Glastonbury Fayre, where they rung out from the half-built Pyramid stage to a group of 'a couple thousand stoned hippies'," as Coxon recalls.

When the decision was made to take the band to London in '73 Spike couldn't come and Marvelous Kid found new faces in bassist Frank Artés and flute and sax doubler Pete Davey. "We weren't working from charts, nothing was written down, but we knew each song inside out," shares Artés. "Each track is a complete piece from start to finish, no working from a click-track, no over dubs, no splicing, pretty much a 'live off the floor' approach." Although tracks were laid down, the band struggled to cut through the noise, disbanding just two years later.

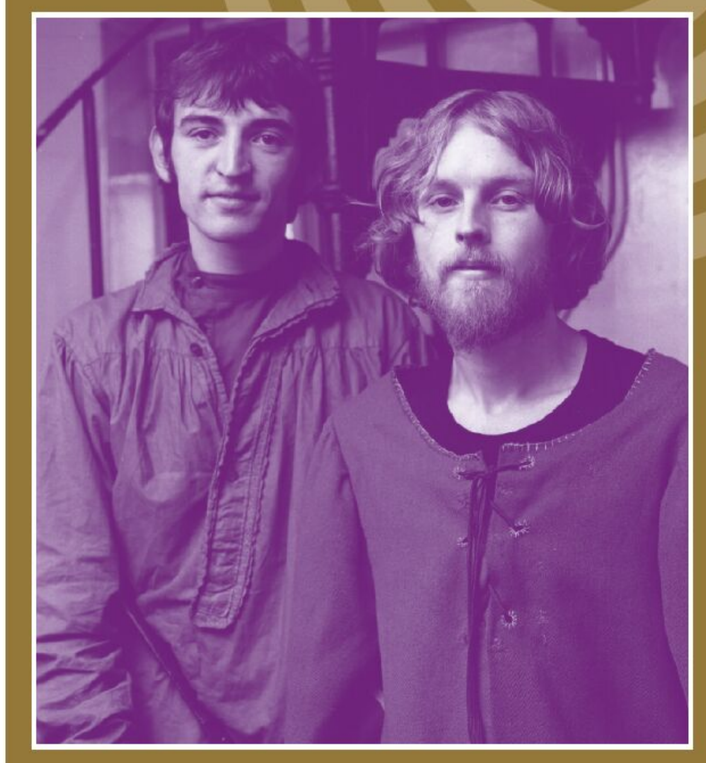
"I hoard and thank goodness I do," Coxon tells us. "After being contacted by Seelie Court I came across a box of assorted cassettes and open reels. Some were low quality recordings from the early days in Cornwall but there were also live recordings from '75, the BBC Maida Vale session and recordings we made at our rented house in Walton-on Thames in '74-75."

"I found it hugely emotional listening to them after all this time," Artés says. "All the memories I had of the friendships, the camaraderie, the collective feeling of independence, it was all there in those songs."

After The Race is out now on Seelie Court. The second disc and vinyl follow soon

Arrested development. Marvelous Kid

next issue



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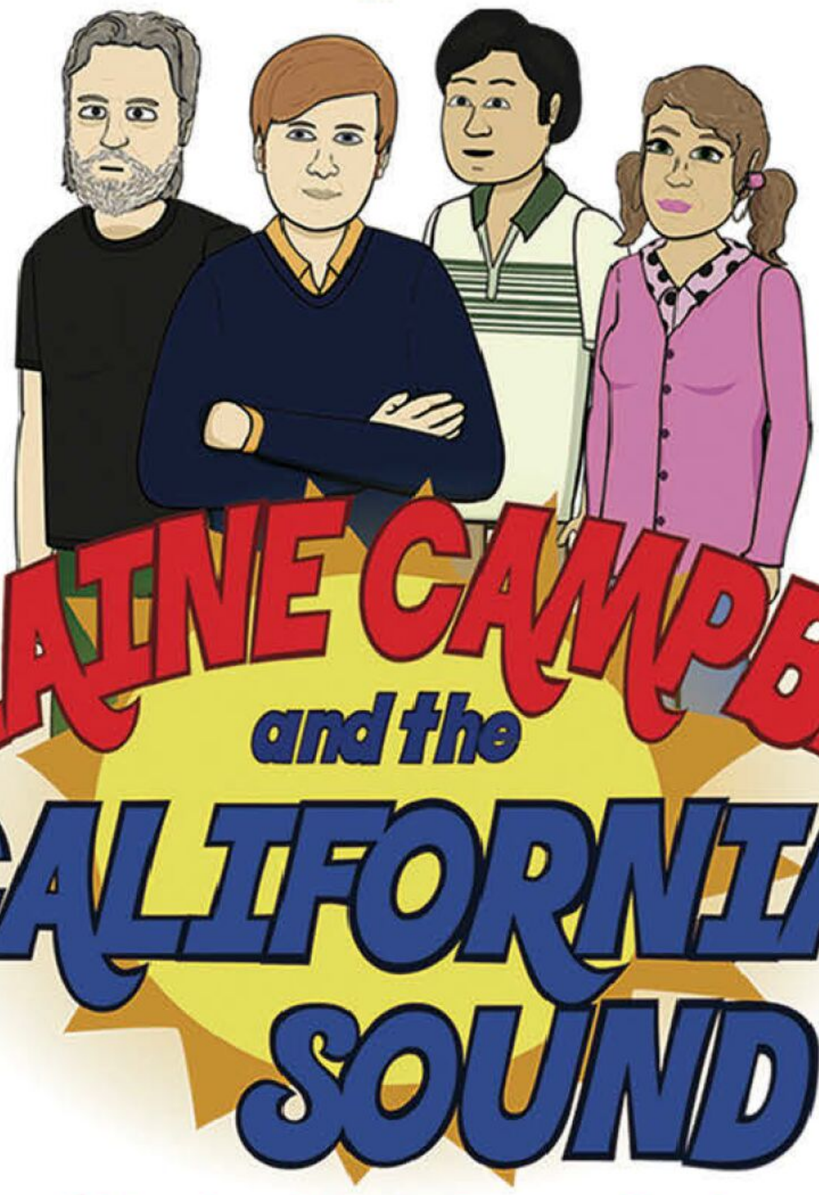

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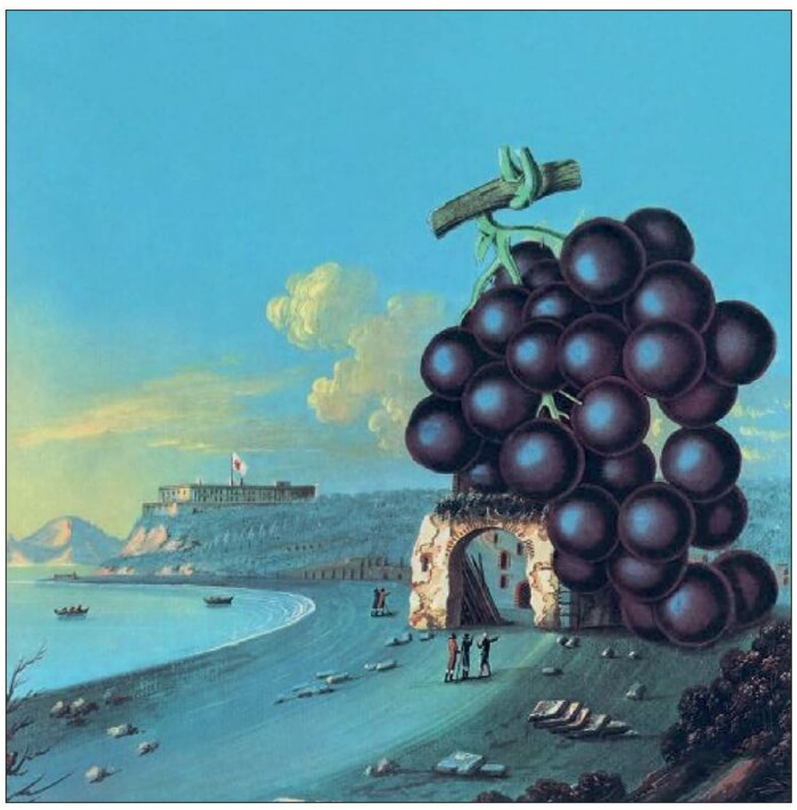
The mercurial Moby Grape in 1967. L-R: Peter Lewis, Jerry Miller, Skip Spence, Bob Mosley and Don Stevenson

Can't Be So Bad

MOBY GRAPE was a band like no other. Like some sort of rock 'n' roll dream team, they each possessed distinct characteristics but collectively wielded magic in songwriting, arranging and blending harmonies with a crosstalk of guitars. Oh, and making astonishingly bad decisions and getting themselves into hot water.

CAM COBB gets inside the turmoil that birthed second album *Wow*

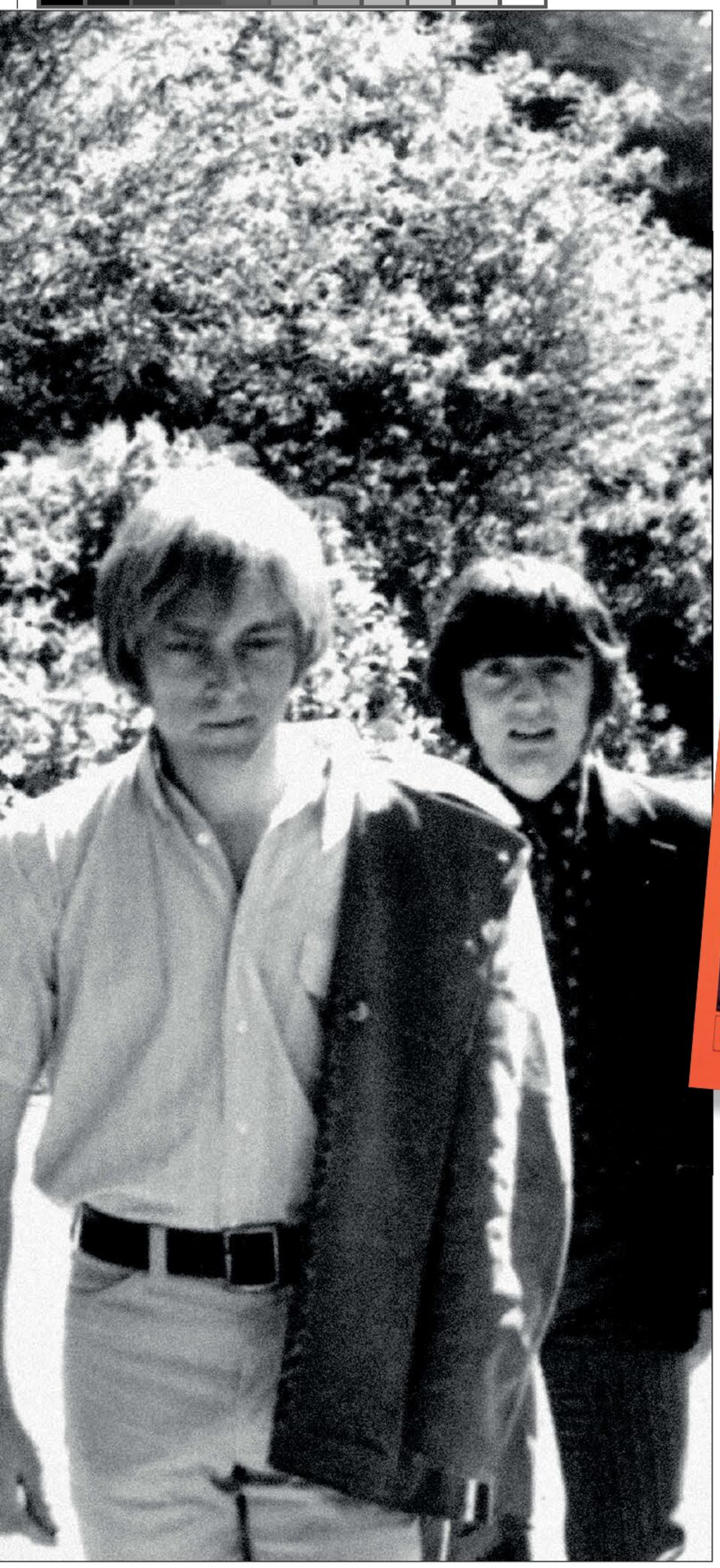


Following a whirlwind of fortuitous encounters, the five future members of Moby Grape – Skip Spence, Peter Lewis, Don Stevenson, Bob Mosley and Jerry Miller – found themselves rehearsing in an upstairs office on Washington Street in San Francisco one fateful afternoon in the late summer of 1966.

Over the next few months, Moby Grape wrote and arranged over a dozen killer songs – and as they honed their performances, became the hottest ticket in The Bay Area, captivating audiences at The Fillmore and The Avalon. After a frenzied bidding war, they signed with Columbia and promptly recorded one of the best debut albums in history. Then things started to unravel. Fast.

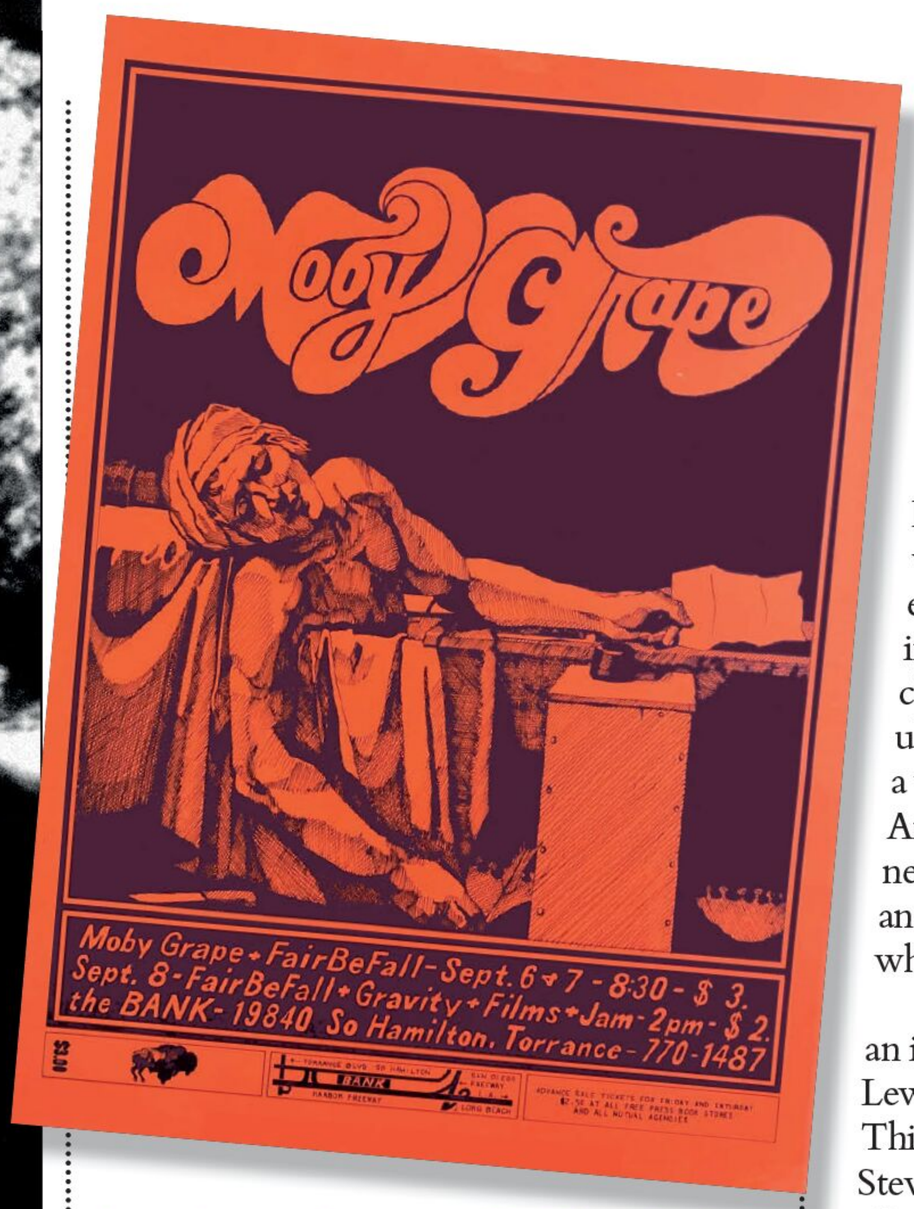
An over-the-top release party was quickly followed by three arrests and an ill-judged "let's release-five-singles-in-one-day" marketing campaign that left multiple sure-fire hits banished to the lower regions of the charts (or off them altogether). A road trip with The Mamas & The Papas quickly turned sour and, after nearly coming to blows with members of The Buckinghams, Moby Grape was unceremoniously booted off the tour. Then, just as their new album was making its way up to #24 on *Billboard*, Columbia patted the musicians on the head, rented a beachfront pad in Malibu, and sent them off to make a new hit album.

Wow is both brilliant and frustrating. Released on 3rd April '68, Moby Grape's second album no longer featured songs



written, arranged and performed by a cohesive unit. And it wasn't material honed on stage either. It's a sometimes stunning, sometimes misguided, somewhat messy collection of 12 songs cobbled together over three extended studio jaunts (one in LA and two in NYC). Between August '67 and February '68, the band wrestled with everything around them. They fired their manager, went on hiatus, relocated to Manhattan (twice), haphazardly darted across the country on poorly scheduled tours, frantically wrote new material, and went on trial in Marin County (for charges leveed against Miller, Lewis and Spence back in June '67). The three won their trial but the delays and dramas that unfolded in the six months it took to record *Wow* cost Moby Grape dearly – they cost the band its future.

A month after the *Wow* sessions wrapped (and just a couple weeks before it came out), the band's former manager started touring a counterfeit Moby Grape – popularly known as *The Fake Grape*. Then, just a couple of months *after* the record came out, Skip Spence had a breakdown in Manhattan and was locked up in Bellevue Hospital for five months. But even with all the missteps, dramas, and tragedies, *Wow* remains an intriguing album. Burton Cummings, a long-time Grape aficionado, ranks it right up there with the band's debut. "The first two are the ones for me," he says.



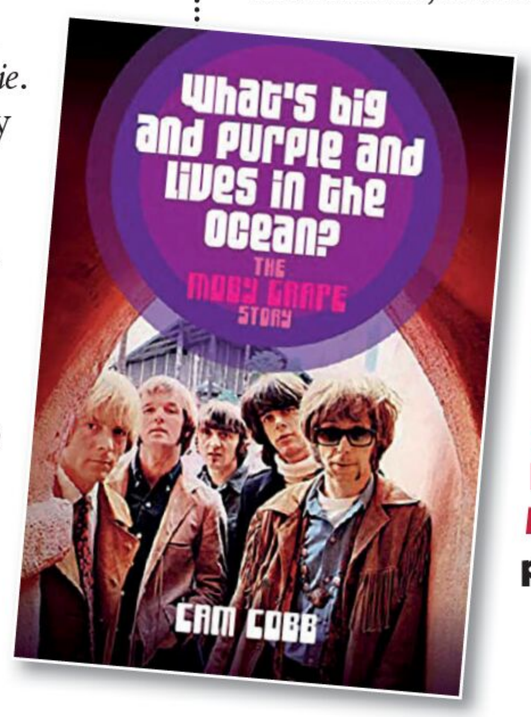
"Peter always left a lot of space in his songs, so there was a lot of room to play, or not play, and a lot of room to figure out harmonies"
– Don Stevenson

Wow kicks off with 'The Place And The Time', an of-its-time production number initially attempted in LA in August '67. Featuring sound effects like a car horn and bicycle bell, the February re-recording doesn't hold a candle to original. It's too bad that first version was cast aside. Drummer Don Stevenson remembers the album track "was almost like a puzzle where the pieces didn't quite fit". Things rev up as bassist Bob Mosley takes lead vocals for 'Murder In My Heart For The Judge', a scathing lyric Stevenson penned about his own experience getting chided by a judge for getting a stack of parking tickets. The thing that irked him wasn't the getting chided itself, it was getting chided (and punished) *for looking like a hippie*. 'Bitter Wind' originated as a folksy number Mosley wrote after his first experience with LSD, but somehow the superior LA version of the song was retooled into a full-on production in New York. After that three-minute veer into psychedelic folk, the pace picks up again as Stevenson grabs hold of the steering wheel with white-hot R&B number 'Can't Be So Bad.' "The shuffle [on that one] was like a train going down the track," Stevenson muses. It soon featured on Columbia's international hit sampler *The Rock Machine Turns You On* and was later covered by Joe Cocker.

Closing the first side of the LP was guitarist Skip Spence's quirky pastiche 'Just Like Gene Autry (A Foxtrot)'. His own dad, Jock, was a crooner who criss-crossed the East Coast years earlier. Bumping into Arthur Godfrey in Columbia's NY studio, Spence charmed the radio legend into playing ukulele on the song and even recording a wacky over-the-top introduction. And just to throw everyone off, listeners needed to sprint to their record players and frantically adjust the speed to 78rpm when the track rolls around.

Side Two opens gently with 'He', an introspective ballad by guitarist Peter Lewis, his sole writing contribution. Thinking back to those initial LA sessions, Stevenson notes, "Peter always left a lot of space in his songs, so there was a lot of room to play, or *not play*, and a lot of room to figure out harmonies." Next up, Spence flips the story of 'Leader Of The Pack' with a comical, cautionary tale, 'Motorcycle Irene'. Decades later, Mosley still remembers the day Spence taught him the song in The Taft Hotel. That was January '68… *before* Spence flashed a bunch of airline workers in the lobby and got everyone booted out of the hotel. The last four tracks on *Wow* run through Mosley's characteristic R&B ('Three-Four'), Spence's zany country-style humour ('Funky-Tunk'), Mosley's foray into balladry ('Rose Colored Eyes'), guitarist Jerry Miller's explosive blues ('Miller's Blues') and a fuzzy electric revisiting of first album curio 'Naked, If I Want To'. While Peter Lewis took a break during the New York sessions, there were still happy times. Jerry Miller laughs when thinking about the day they recorded 'Funky-Tunk'. "We laughed so hard, we almost pissed ourselves!" "That sped-up voice was my voice," Mosley adds.

This may be a hot take, but this writer wagers that *Wow* scales the same heights as *Moby Grape* – the snag is it just doesn't reach them as often or stay on them for as long. Sure, it's overproduced in parts, and a little disjointed in others, but this is Moby Grape – the brilliant, catastrophic dream team, at a time when they were struggling to survive; a snapshot of a white-hot band fighting a war on multiple fronts, both from within and from without. S!



What's Big And Purple And Lives In The Ocean? The Moby Grape Story is published by Jawbone

deep cuts

The Screaming Madcap

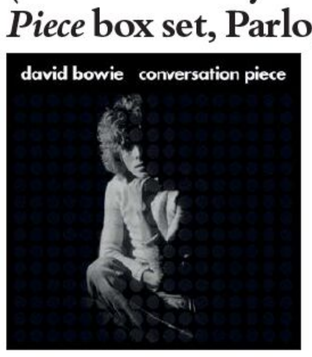
THE PINK FLOYD defined "the next projected sound of '67" and notched up two Top 20 singles and a ground-breaking Top 10 album that summer. But, despite decades of retrospective adoration and homage, the original Floyd's sonic blueprint – particularly that of founder and leader **SYD BARRETT**, whose life is celebrated in new documentary movie *Have You Got It Yet?* – proved too singular to attract the kind of emulation commonly heard in the pantheon of Beatles, Stones, Kinks and Who wannabes.

Nevertheless, examples do exist, as our eclectic study reveals

THE FRESH WINDOWS
Fashion Conscious
(B-side, Fontana, June 1967)

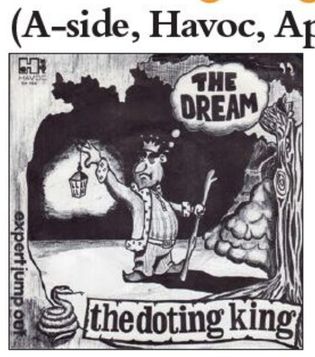
London-based quartet The Fresh Windows gifted us one 45, the B-side of which gained immortality following its inclusion on 1980 psych boot *Chocolate Soup For Diabetics*. *Soup*'s cheeky compilers tweaked the writing credit to "S Barrett", a sly move that, given the track's "Syd sings The Troggs" vocal mannerisms and swinging I Was Lord Kitchener's Valet lyrical concerns ("Trousers that flare / People who stare / Military store / Jackets galore"), confounded listeners for years. In truth, Barrett was Windows singer/guitarist Brian, who also penned wonderful topside 'Summer Sun Shines' and a reported further half dozen unreleased tracks. The group performed live at the London premiere of the film *You're A Big Boy Now* but vanished soon afterwards.

DAVID BOWIE
When I'm Five (home demo)
(Recorded early 1968, from *Conversation Piece* box set, Parlophone, 2019)



Conceived just as he got his marching orders from Deram, Bowie's paean to nipperdom 'When I'm Five' is best-known through a charming (although somewhat am-dram) set piece from 1969 promo film *Love You Till Tuesday*, mimed to a May '68 performance for the BBC's *Top Gear* show. Ironically, Dave's clanking, lysergic early '68 home demo sounds even more like a *Top Gear* session. Delivered in blank mockney and wearing its *Piper*-ian influences on its snotty sleeve, it's suffused enough with the spirit of Syd to sit between 'Jugband Blues' and 'Vegetable Man' on any grotty-sounding cassette boot of Floyd radio gear.

THE DREAM
The Doting King
(A-side, Havoc, April 1968)



Created by Floris Kolvenbach from the ashes of Mother's Love, Dutch quintet The Dream's debut single 'The Doting King' was originally conceived as a children's opera piece. It's not only Kolvenbach's overly exaggerated English-style vocal enunciation that bring this lysergic happening closer than almost anything else (bar the verse sequences in The Pretty Things' 'Defecting Grey') to the childlike wonder of the Barrett-led Floyd, so much as the overall playing. The floating

Syd Barrett. Iconic and influential yet rarely mimicked

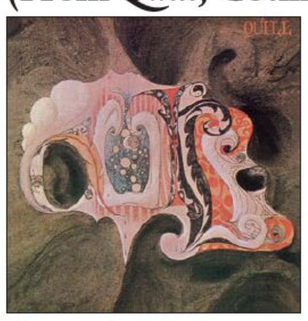
"Delivered in blank mockney and wearing its *Piper*-ian influences on its snotty sleeve, 'When I'm Five' is suffused enough with the spirit of Syd to sit between 'Jugband Blues' and 'Vegetable Man' on any grotty-sounding cassette boot of Floyd radio gear"

keyboards, drums and sinister whispered vocal intonations, plus Kolvenbach's excellent production, help to expertly convey such a wide-eyed psychedelic experience.

CHARGE
Boring Song
(B-side, Zeugma, 1970)

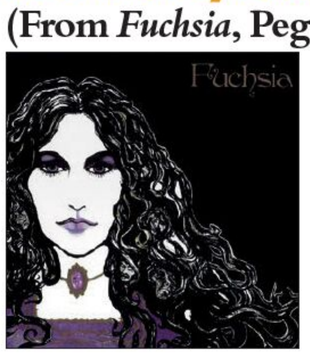
The jury is still out on whether this recording by three Derby art students – crudely captured in the college library and pressed up as 50 singles – is an affectionate nod or a schoolboy piss-take. "It's so boring, I can't stand it, I can't wait until the end," they drone, like the upstanding counterculture agitators they clearly were. If you can get beyond the no-fi sound quality, you'll hear snatches of jagged chromatic bar chords and echoed bottom E-string notes that suggest an affinity with the Syd-era Floyd, who'd performed in the city in June 1967. By '71, all three members of Charge had been conscripted into Arthur Brown's Kingdom Come, sealing their scuzz-rock credentials forever.

QUILL
Yellow Butterfly
(From *Quill*, Cotillion LP, 1970)



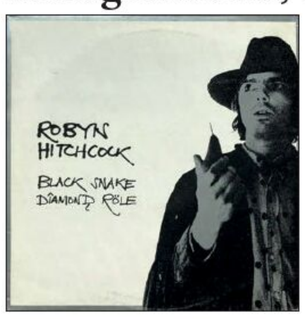
Buried in the middle of the second side of this lesser-known US psych LP, 'Yellow Butterfly' is a lovely acid-folk number. Self-produced by the band, subtly flanged guitar arpeggios set the tone before reverbed vocals enter with a melody and delivery so unexpectedly Floydian you feel the need to check the songwriting credits. By the end of the track the strummed guitar has become nicely squiffy with effects. The repeated line to fade of "A child I remain" feels like the spirit of Syd has broken through into the song and taken over. Quill only recorded this sole LP, which is a great shame. Chances are they'd have had at least a couple more if the film of their appearance at Woodstock hadn't suffered from technical issues meaning they couldn't be included in the movie that launched so many other careers.

FUCHSIA
Me And My Kite
(From *Fuchsia*, Pegasus LP, 1971)



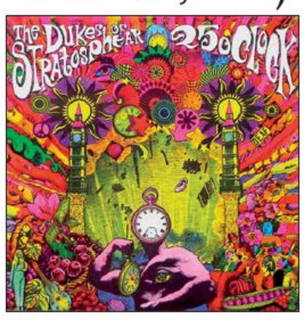
Tony Durant had travelled through the very same underground gig circuit as Syd's Floyd as leader of pop-psych hopefuls Louise, adopting face paint and a light show and performing their extended freak-outs at hip centres like Happening 44 and The Roundhouse with the likes of The Move and The Deviants. By the time Louise had morphed into Fuchsia and recorded their sole album at Sound Techniques in Chelsea, Durant's songs had developed into uncategorisably unique creations that positioned them somewhere between Comus and Caravan. The ghost of Syd looms large on 'Me And My Kite', the album's most compact and cohesive cut; just check his enunciation on opening line "Up and down the escalator" if proof were needed.

ROBYN HITCHCOCK
Brenda's Iron Sledge
(From *Black Snake Diamond Röle*, Armageddon LP, 1981)



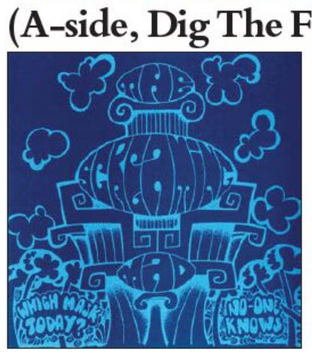
'Brenda's Iron Sledge' is one of many songs by former Soft Boys frontman and confirmed Syd nut Robyn Hitchcock that could be described as Barrett-esque. Possibly more contrived than the organic sounding offerings of the original madcap, this magnificent cut nevertheless does a great job of capturing the essence of Syd, such incongruous yet poetic lyrics as "Their limbs compressed in icy slush" and the irresistible chorus singalong of "all aboard Brenda's iron sledge, please don't call me Reg, it's not my name", doing much to conjure the sense of Barrett's extraordinary solo explorations.

ANDY PARTRIDGE
Susan Revolving (demo)
(Recorded 1982, from *25 O'Clock*, Ape House CD, 2009)



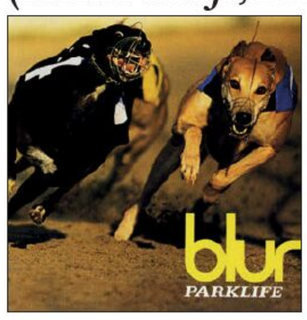
The Dukes Of Stratosphear's two albums of '60s psych homages are the stuff of legend. This short, possibly incomplete demo, recorded live to tape prior to sessions for XTC's 1983 album *Mummer,* would've been a shoo-in for the Dukes' *25 O'Clock*, yet was consigned to Andy Partridge's bulging catalogue of unused fragments. The Syd influence is palpable, both in Partridge's low, almost spoken vocal, and the chromatic chord changes that evoke legendary Floyd off-cut 'Scream Thy Last Scream'. US musician Becki DiGregorio expanded Partridge's 1:20 demo into a full-tilt five-minute piece for her 2002 album *God's Empty Chair*; a titillating peak at what might have been had the Dukes got their mittens on it.

THE SCREAMING MAD
Which Mask Today?
(A-side, Dig The Fuzz, 1998)



A genuine English (modern) psychedelic secret that hailed from north-east England and was masterminded by guitarist/vocalist Timothy Oxnard. Imagine a 1967 rave-up featuring members of Soft Machine, The Pink Floyd and The Misunderstood. These elements provide some clue as to what's happening on this extraordinary record. It's a peculiar dance indeed, led by jagged, angular guitar, speedy, skittering drums, zooming bass and odd, nervy post-Floyd Barrett-esque vocals. Then everything bursts open into an exploding freeform sound galaxy, before returning once more to the song's tense, pre-freak-out strangeness.

BLUR
Far Out
(From *Parklife*, Food LP, 1994)



Perversely, we end on a selection from one of the iconic albums of the '90s, though many listeners presumably had no idea of its source. Originally a thunderous, slightly aimless full band out-take, Blur bassist Alex James's short, charming 'Far Out' saw release on *Parklife* after a total remake and some ruthless editing by Damon Albarn, who stripped James's tune down to its verses and binned the rest. A woozy anthem to stargazing, it sounds like a *Barrett*-era wee hours remake of 'Astronomy Domine', taking on Syd-like qualities through James' hushed, oh-so English lead vocal and some barely-there acoustic guitar and congas. Fading out on a trippy repeat echo of "Sun-sun-sun-sun…", Albarn's pier-end organ grounds it, but only just. S!

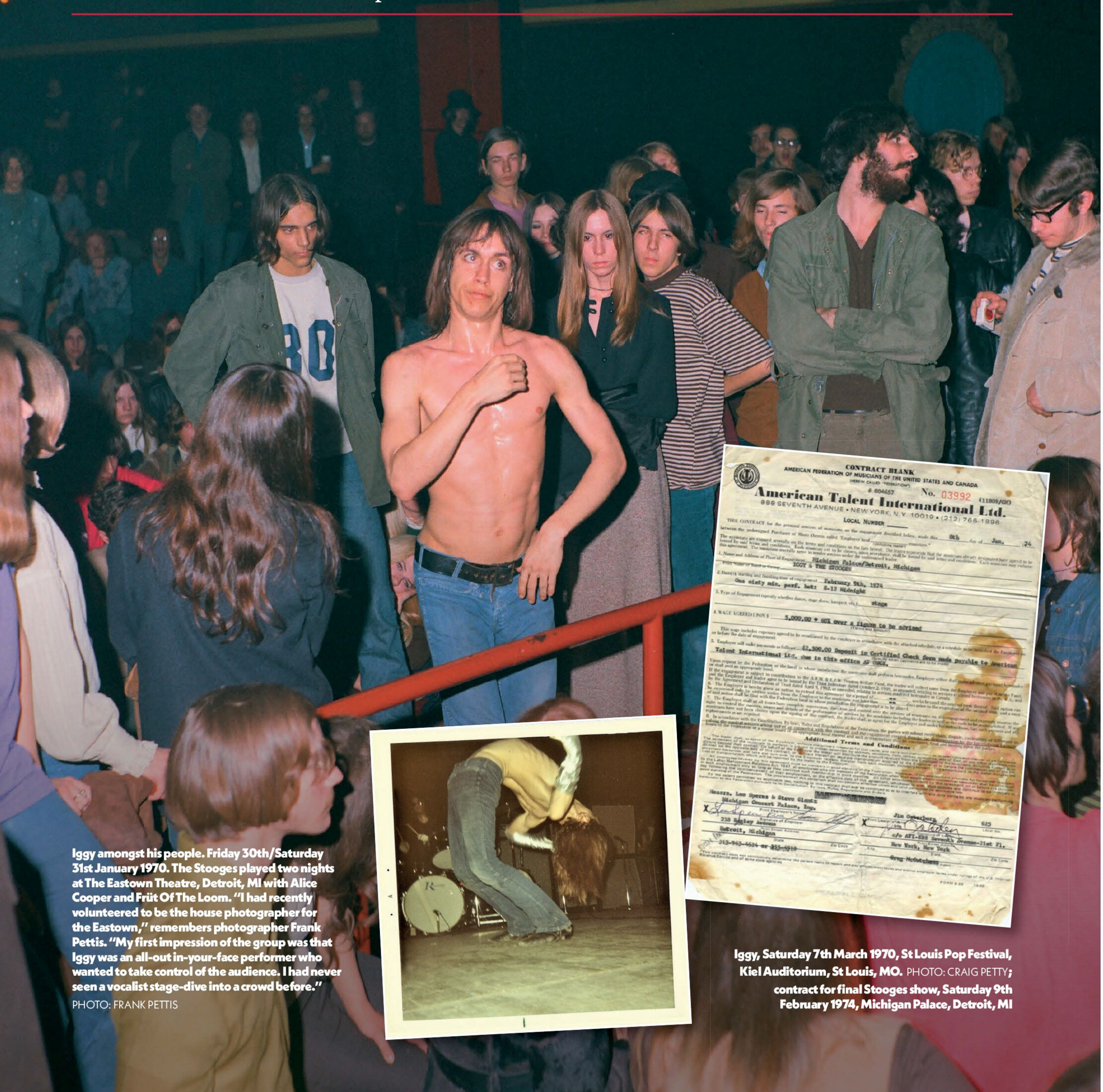
Contributors: Lenny Helsing, Andy Morten, Martin Ruddock, Andrew Ure

Have You Got It Yet? is on selected theatre release now. See sydbarrettfilm.com for details

Heavy Liquid

Iggy Pop and **THE STOOGES** balled their way through seven years of incendiary live performances, fitful (not always fruitful) recording sessions and the occasional beer or two like no band before them, leaving a triptych of canonical long-players and a trail of blood-spattered stages and adoring onlookers in their wake.

Luxurious full-colour 300-page large-scale hardback *The Truth Is In The Sound* We Make chronicles every Stooges live show and studio session – from their ramshackle October 1967 debut to February '74's missile-strewn finale, via vivid photographic evidence and eyewitness accounts of the whole damn trip



CONTRACT BLANK
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA
(HEREIN CALLED "FEDERATION")

004657 No. 03992 (11809/GO)

American Talent International Ltd.
888 SEVENTH AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019 • (212) 765-1896

LOCAL NUMBER ____

THIS CONTRACT for the personal services of musicians, on the engagement described below, made this 8th day of Jan., 74 between the undersigned Purchaser of Music (herein called 'Employer') and ____ (hereinafter called 'leader') and the musicians hereinafter designated (hereinafter called "musicians."

The musicians are engaged severally on the terms and conditions on the face hereof. The leader represents that the musicians already designated have agreed to be bound by said terms and conditions. Each musician yet to be chosen, upon acceptance, shall be bound by said terms and conditions. Each musician may enforce this agreement. The musicians severally agree to render services under the undersigned leader.

1. Name and Address of Place of Engagement: Michigan Palace/Detroit, Michigan
Name of Band or Group: IGGY & THE STOOGES

2. Date(s), starting and finishing time of engagement: February 9th, 1974
One sixty min. perf. bet: 8-12 Midnight

3. Type of Engagement (specify whether dance, stage show, banquet, etc.): Stage

4. WAGE AGREED UPON $ 5,000.00 + 60% over a figure to be advised
(Terms and Amount)
This wage includes expenses agreed to be reimbursed by the employer in accordance with the attached schedule, or a schedule to be furnished the Employer no later than the date of engagement.

5. Employer will make payments as follows: $2,500.00 Deposit in Certified Check form made payable to American Talent International Ltd. due in this office 48 HRS.
(Specify when payments are to be made)

Upon request by the Federation or the local in whose jurisdiction the musicians shall perform hereunder, Employer either shall make advance payment hereunder or shall post an appropriate bond.

If the engagement is subject to contribution to the A.F.M. S.E.P.W. Pension Welfare Fund, the leader will collect same from the Employer and pay it to the Fund, and the Employer and leader agree to be bound by the Trust Indenture dated October 2, 1959, as amended, relating to pensions and welfare benefits, as the Agreement and Declaration of Trust dated April 9, 1962, as amended, relating to services rendered hereunder in Canada.

6. The Employer is hereby given an option, to extend this agreement for a period of ____ weeks beyond the original term thereof. Said option can be exercised only by written notice from the Employer to the musicians not later than ____ days prior to the expiration of the second term, and a copy of said notice shall be filed with the Federation local in whose jurisdiction the engagement is to be played.

7. The Employer shall at all times have complete supervision, direction and control over the services of musicians on the engagement and expressly reserves the right to control the manner, means and details of the performance of services by the musicians including the leader as well as the order or sequence in which services shall be rendered hereunder. If musicians have not been chosen upon the signing of this contract, the leader shall, as agent for the Employer and under his instructions, hire such persons and all replacements as are required.

8. In accordance with the Constitution, By-laws, Rules and Regulations of the Federation, the parties will submit every claim, dispute, controversy or difference arising out of or connected with this contract and the engagement covered thereby, or the determination by the International Executive Board of any question arising hereunder, to the final and binding upon the parties.

Additional Terms and Conditions

The leader shall, as agent for the Employer, enforce the Employer's obligations to the musicians and collect all monies due them hereunder. On behalf of the Employer the leader agrees to pay the musicians promptly at the conclusion of the engagement, unless otherwise stated herein, the full amount due them hereunder, and take such receipts therefor as the Employer may require. The leader shall deduct from the musicians' salaries and pay to the Federation, Local or other authority, any tax required by law to be withheld at the source of payment, and shall furnish the Employer with a statement showing the amount withheld from each musician. The Employer agrees to supply to the leader, upon request, any information necessary to enable the leader to make such withholding and to file such returns as may be required by law. The leader agrees to indemnify the Employer against any claim, tax, penalty or interest which may be assessed against the Employer by reason of the leader's failure to withhold or pay over any such tax. The leader shall not be responsible for the payment of any wages due musicians who are replaced by the Employer at the commencement of their employment, unless such replacement is made with the consent of the leader. The leader shall not be responsible for the payment of any wages due musicians who continue such employment after the effective date of this agreement, which wages shall be paid by the Employer. The leader shall not be responsible for the payment of any wages due musicians who are replaced by the Employer at the commencement of their employment, or the effective date of this agreement, unless such replacement is made with the consent of the leader. The leader shall not be responsible for the payment of any wages due musicians who continue such employment after the effective date of this agreement, which wages shall be paid by the Employer. The leader shall not be responsible for the payment of any wages due musicians who are replaced by the Employer at the commencement of their employment, or the effective date of this agreement, unless such replacement is made with the consent of the leader.

To the extent permitted by applicable law, nothing in this contract shall be construed so as to interfere with any duty owing by any musician performing hereunder to the Federation pursuant to the Constitution, By-laws, Rules, Regulations and Orders.

Messrs. Leo Speros & Steve Glantz
Michigan Concert Palace, Inc.
Print Employer's Name
X Signature of Employer
238 Bagley Avenue
Street Address
Detroit, Michigan
City State
313-963-4624 or 355-4910
Zip Code

Jim Osterberg
Print Leader's Name
X Signature of Leader
625
Local No.
c/o AFI-888 Seventh Avenue-21st Fl.
Street Address of Leader
New York, New York
City State
Greg McCutcheon
Agent
Zip Code

FORM B-25 10-65

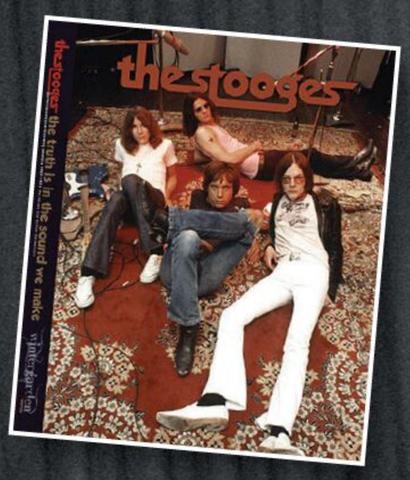
Iggy amongst his people. Friday 30th/Saturday 31st January 1970. The Stooges played two nights at The Eastown Theatre, Detroit, MI with Alice Cooper and Früt Of The Loom. "I had recently volunteered to be the house photographer for the Eastown," remembers photographer Frank Pettis. "My first impression of the group was that Iggy was an all-out in-your-face performer who wanted to take control of the audience. I had never seen a vocalist stage-dive into a crowd before." PHOTO: FRANK PETTIS

Iggy, Saturday 7th March 1970, St Louis Pop Festival, Kiel Auditorium, St Louis, MO. PHOTO: CRAIG PETTY; **contract for final Stooges show, Saturday 9th February 1974, Michigan Palace, Detroit, MI**

Top: L-R: Dave Alexander, Scott Asheton, Iggy Pop, Ron Asheton, still billed as The Psychedelic Stooges for this event. Friday 18th July 1969, Fifth Forum Theatre, Ann Arbor, MI. PHOTO: PETER YATES

Middle: Scott, Tuesday 13th January 1970, Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, MI. PHOTO: TOM COPI**; Ron, Whisky A Go Go, Los Angeles, CA.** PHOTO: ED CARAEFF

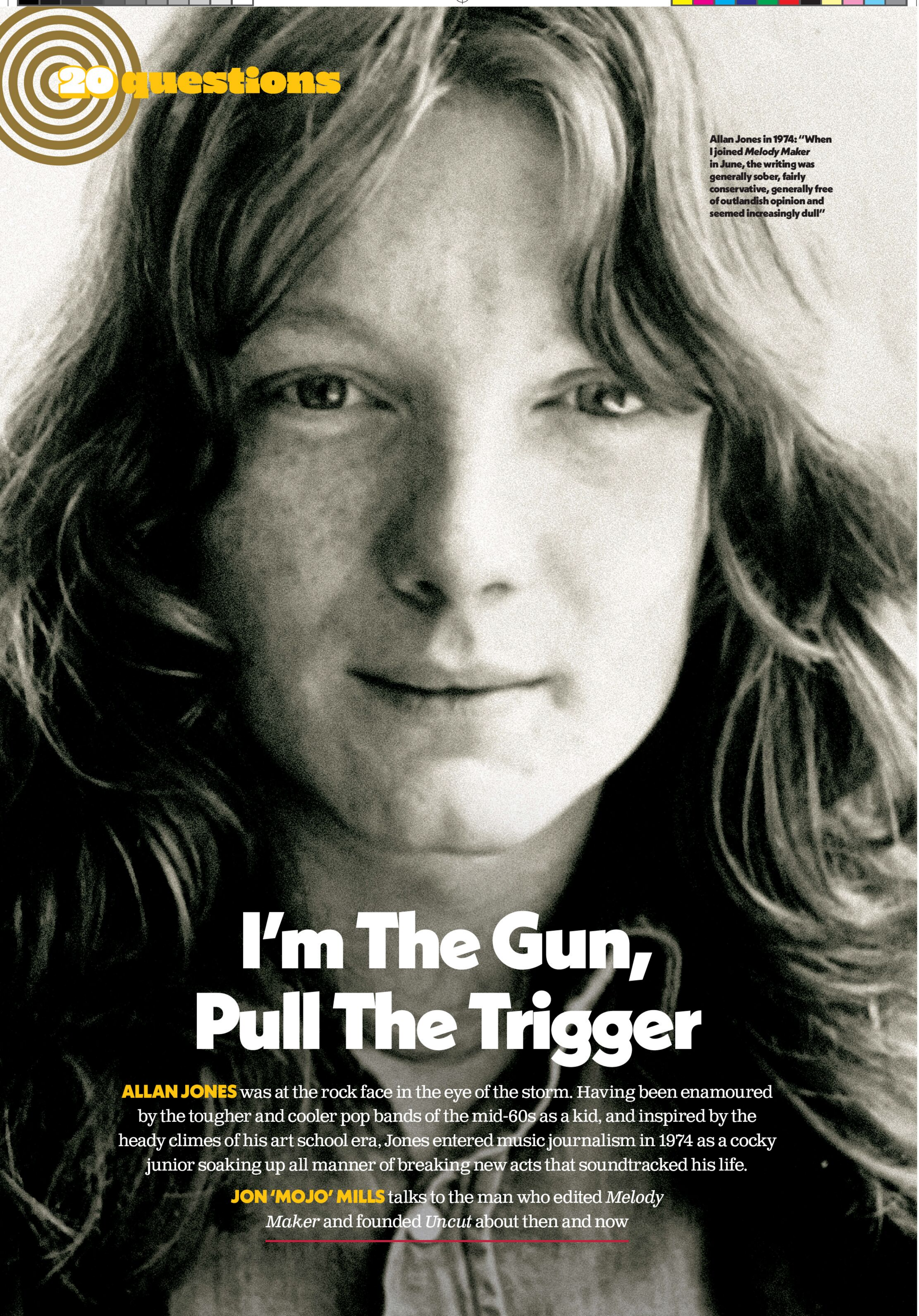
Bottom: Ron and Iggy, Tuesday 27th March 1973, Ford Auditorium, Detroit, MI. "It wasn't just a gig – it was an event: the return of The Stooges to their hometown." PHOTO: ERIC RUDOLPH



With thanks to Carlton P Sandercock

The Truth Is In The Sound We Make: The Stooges' Performances And Recording Sessions 1967-1974 is published by Wintergarden. Turn to page nine for your chance to win a copy

20 questions



Allan Jones in 1974: "When I joined *Melody Maker* in June, the writing was generally sober, fairly conservative, generally free of outlandish opinion and seemed increasingly dull"

I'm The Gun, Pull The Trigger

ALLAN JONES was at the rock face in the eye of the storm. Having been enamoured by the tougher and cooler pop bands of the mid-60s as a kid, and inspired by the heady climes of his art school era, Jones entered music journalism in 1974 as a cocky junior soaking up all manner of breaking new acts that soundtracked his life.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS talks to the man who edited *Melody Maker* and founded *Uncut* about then and now

***Shindig!*:** What was it that first ignited you as a teenager in the mid-60s about pop music?
Allan Jones: I had an older cousin who used to turn up with the new singles she'd bought when she babysat for me and my brother. She loved The Beatles, Searchers, Merseybeat generally. As one of those presumptuously sullen pre-teens who to the benefit of everyone concerned should probably have been locked up, it all seemed a bit too perky to me and when you saw these groups on light entertainment shows on the TV, they looked as square in their matching suits and moptop grins as their dinner-jacketed hosts. I had an itch for something wilder and found it on holiday with my parents at a holiday camp in Devon in July 1964 when I was stopped in my tracks by something blasting over the camp Tannoy that sounded like nothing I'd heard before. It was certainly a long way from 'She Loves You', 'Needles And Pins' and whatever Gerry & The Pacemakers had in the charts that week. I was desperate to find out what the record was and who it was by and found out where the camp DJ had a small studio and he laughed when he told me the record I was struggling excitedly to describe was 'It's All Over Now', a new record by The Rolling Stones. It was the first single I bought. From the Stones, I quickly moved on to The Small Faces, The Kinks, The Who, The Animals. An older friend named Andrew Griffiths seemed to have decided all the best rock 'n' roll had already been made. He played me Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Elvis, Bo Diddley, throwing in along the way some Muddy Waters and Little Walter. I grew up in a small South Wales steel town, far from swinging scenes in London, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, so the music I was listening to quickly became the rowdy soundtrack to my own modest rebellions, yearning for escape, the thrilling possibility of a different tomorrow.

School, circa 1962, "a couple of years before I became a prisoner of rock 'n' roll"; the '60s music press that first attracted the young Jones

***S!*:** *When* did you first start reading the music press?
AJ: As soon as I got back from the holiday in Devon and bought 'It's All Over Now', I started reading *Melody Maker*, *New Musical Express*, *Disc & Music Echo* and I got *Fabulous 208* for the glossy colour pictures.

***S!*:** Did you feel like the weeklies represented you in any way or did you find older "chaps schooled on jazz" and the teen-pop writing of Penny Valentine didn't truly represent what was happening as the mid-60s took hold?
AJ: Penny Valentine at *Disc* was a fantastic writer. I used to get *Disc* just for her singles reviews that were better than anything else around. She seemed to know everyone who mattered and wrote about them with a cool familiarity. She was as hot on soul and Motown as she was on Love's *Forever Changes*. She was really a pioneer, one of the best pop writers of the time. When I first started reading *Melody Maker*, the writers all seemed terrifically old school. You imagined them in suits and trilbies, with press tickets in their hat bands, chain smoking at their typewriters, possibly old jazzers coming to terms with the changing music scene, people like Bob Dawbarn, who seemed to be their star writer then. Chris Welch joined the staff in 1964, though, and he was an exciting young new voice at the time and often very funny. Nick Jones, the son of *MM*'s veteran jazz writer Max Jones, was also soon worth reading for his reports on the emerging London underground scene and bands like Pink Floyd and Soft Machine. Nick was also hip to what was happening in San Francisco and LA in '66 and '67.

***S!*:** Which publication did you like the most and which writers did you admire?
AJ: *Melody Maker* quickly became my favourite music weekly. By the end of the '60s, early '70s, Richard Williams and Michael Watts were my favourite writers. You could have put together a pretty decent record collection by paying attention to their recommendations. I did, anyway.

***S!*:** As pop music began to grow into rock and you a young man what musical path did you follow? Which bands and artists were you fanatical about?
AJ: The '60s record that had the most impact on me by an incredible distance was *The Velvet Underground & Nico*. I was also fairly fanatical by 1967 about Love, The Incredible String Band, Pink Floyd, Leonard Cohen, Roy Harper and Jimi Hendrix, who I saw at Cardiff's Sophia Gardens in November – another revelation: Jimi arriving on stage like he was from another planet, possibly in a spaceship made of fire, Stratocaster parts and feedback. I saw a few local bands and even went with some friends to local folk clubs, although that was always akin to visiting a dying relative. Tickets for concerts in Cardiff by major bands were always hard to get, but there was a great place called The Key Club in Bridgend, a small town between Port Talbot and Cardiff. It was a tiny room, not much bigger than a mini cab office, but we saw some great shows there. Pink Floyd, just after David Gilmour replaced Syd Barrett; Kevin Ayers; Roy Harper; The Nice; Third Ear Band; Pete Brown And His Battered Ornaments; The Edgar Broughton Band; Yes. When I went to art school in Newport in September '69, it was easier to get to Bristol for shows. I saw The Who at The Hippodrome, their first UK show after Woodstock, and The Byrds with Clarence White at Colston Hall, where I was also blown away by David Bowie on the *Ziggy Stardust* tour. No one played Newport as a rule, but in June '72, just before 'Virginia Plain' came out, Roxy Music appeared at a place called The Newport Country Club, a warm-up for dates in London supporting David Bowie and Alice Cooper, one of their earliest shows and another brain-melting moment. Otherwise, by the early '70s I was fanatical about records by Bowie, Roxy Music, Lou Reed, Gram Parsons, Laura Nyro, The Stooges, Neil Young, MC5, Syd Barrett, Tim Buckley. I was also developing a major crush on Waylon Jennings, fully consummated with the release of *Honky Tonk Heroes* in '73.

***S!*:** You entered music journalism at the age of 21, working as a junior reporter on *Melody Maker*. Were you aware of what was unfolding and how the music press was maybe now serious… and more rock 'n' roll? Did you sense the potential? How did you view the likes of Nick Kent, Mick Farren and Charles Shaar Murray?
AJ: It was obvious from reading *Melody Maker* so closely for so long how much had changed since I first picked up a copy in 1964. There was more depth and detail to interviews and reviews, although there wasn't anything like the long form musical journalism you found in *Rolling Stone*. When I joined *MM* in June '74, the writing was generally sober, fairly conservative, generally free of outlandish opinion and seemed increasingly dull. Hence the false

"The *Melody Maker* office in Meymott Street, near Waterloo. With news editor Brian Harrigan and my great friend Colin Irwin. Probably 1975."

"Doing drugs with Lou Reed seemed a pretty rock 'n' roll thing to do. I'm not sure what we ended up taking, but I don't remember so much as blinking for about three days"

"Richard Williams and Michael Watts were my favourite writers. You could have put together a pretty decent record collection by paying attention to their recommendations. I did, anyway"

bravado of the sign off to the letter I wrote applying for the job of feature writer/reporter they'd recently advertised: "*Melody Maker* needs a bullet up the arse. I'm the gun, pull the trigger." Although I was aware at the time that *NME* had developed a hip new personality, I wasn't a regular *NME* reader and hadn't read much by Nick, Charles or Mick Farren. What really struck me about the reinvented *NME* was its editorial sharpness – better covers, design, headlines, stand firsts, picture captions – and a growing sense whenever I looked at an issue of outspokenness and a hugely welcome irreverence. The bye line pictures of the writers also stood out. The editorial mug shots in *Melody Maker* of Michael Watts and Chris Welch, say, made them look respectively like someone wanted by Interpol and a man who'd just won a marrow in a raffle. Nick Kent, meanwhile, looked like one of Roxy Music's itinerant early bass players and Charles Shaar Murray seemed to have just stepped out of an MC5 photo-shoot.

***S!*:** You've been critical of the pomp of prog-rock. How do you feel those big acts fare now? Are you surprised that there's still love for the genre? Heck, there's even a magazine.
AJ: Prog was and continues to be in any incarnation a musical sinkhole that's just not my thing. All that pompous bluster, vacuous instrumental virtuosity, fret-wanking guitar solos that went on as long as transatlantic flights, the wizard's hats, capes, codpieces, concept albums, dry ice and lasers, it wasn't my bag at all. I hated it then; I hate it now.

***S!*:** At the other end of the spectrum were the glam and pub-rock scenes that paved the way for punk. Glam was perhaps more of a product, both teen-orientated and pop, and pub-rock much more grassroots, but did you see connection between the two movements in the sense that both were so different from the prog and the heavy bands?
AJ: Roxy Music, Bowie, T Rex, Alice Cooper and The New York Dolls were all a thrilling alternative to prog, hard-rock and heavy metal, glam's promiscuous stardust always preferable to earnest musical virtuosity and instrumental pyrotechnics. Pub-rock was as much a reaction to glam as it was to prog, every element of spectacle largely surrendered to self-effacement. Pub-rock is often defined by images of blokes with beards in checked shirts playing country-rock. But it was host, too, to the blazing eccentricities of Ian Dury in Kilburn & The High Roads and the ferocity of Canvey Island's R&B monsters Dr Feelgood, in so many ways John The Baptists to The Sex Pistols' savage messiahs and the full-on fury of punk that followed.

***S!*:** Name a few acts that impressed you, whether as people, musicians, entertainers or other? Who were the most fun to interview?
AJ: I had most fun interviewing, touring and writing about Lou Reed, John Cale, Alex Harvey, David Bowie, Neil Young, Lemmy, Dr Feelgood, Rockpile, Elvis Costello, The Clash, The Sex Pistols, Squeeze, XTC, The Specials, Townes Van Zandt, Eddie Vedder. Van Morrison was very difficult. Gordon Lightfoot threatened to punch me. Tony Iommi did.

***S!*:** Your first memoir, 2017's *Can't Stand Up For Falling Down*, chronicles fun times with a wide array of "legends". Drugs, booze, and incessant partying were to some extent as important as the music, weren't they? What are some of your most rock 'n' roll experiences, good or did?
AJ: Doing drugs with Lou Reed seemed a pretty rock 'n' roll thing to do. I'm not sure what we ended up taking, but I don't remember so much as blinking for about three days. Sharing a bottle of home-brewed moonshine with Bo Diddley on an overnight drive from Cleveland to Washington DC through the worst blizzard in local memory, the two of us and the driver the only people awake on The Clash's tour bus, is also a cherished rock 'n' roll memory. An outlandish trip to Lapland with Nick Lowe in 1978 was also unforgettable. As was Captain Sensible setting fire to my hair and The Pretenders' Pete Farndon giving me a big bag of cocaine

to entertain the Hell's Angels who'd turned up at the after-show party in San Francisco. Being with Ozzy Osbourne when he was arrested by gun-toting Texas Rangers after pissing on The Alamo might also be mentioned. Being on The Sex Pistols' Jubilee boat trip on the Thames was also a bit lively. My worse rock 'n' roll moment was being smashed in the face by Tony Iommi.

***S!*:** You told Tony Iommi how *Creem* classified Black Sabbath as "punk" and he didn't like it. The term was in use from *Nuggets* on through The Stooges and Dolls, but when did you first start to think of it as movement? Your 1977 run-in with The Sex Pistols is most amusing. After years of prog and Zep did you sense that this was the band that were needed?

AJ: The first time I saw The Sex Pistols they didn't seem especially capable of answering a knock at the door, let alone a clamour for wholesale musical upheaval and a generational shift that rejected the bloated spectacle of '70s rock with its supergroups and an increasingly aloof rock aristocracy that reeked of pompous entitlement. They were supporting Joe Strummer's 101'ers at The Nashville Rooms on 3rd April 1976. I was standing at the bar with Joe and 101'ers guitarist Clive Timperley when they came on. The sound was thin, shrill, rickety – a version of The Monkees' 'I'm Not Your Stepping Stone' about the only thing I can remember about the show, apart from Johnny Rotten's whiney sarcasm. "You may hate us," he told an audience that up to that point had received them with not much more than mild indifference. "But not as much as we hate you." I was standing at the bar with Joe Strummer when they played, and he looked at them like he'd just seen a future he wanted to be part of, which was punk. I didn't get the Pistols then or at their second show with The 101'ers at The Nashville on 23rd April, but they were almost a different band when I saw them, supporting The Pretty Things on 9th July at an all-night gig at The Lyceum and they were on fire by The 100 Club Punk Festival in September. The most dramatic time I saw them was on the Jubilee boat trip, searchlights from police launches lighting up the night, things getting violent when the police boarded our boat and cleared the decks, truncheons drawn. I don't know exactly when I started to think of punk as a movement. It was suddenly happening, everywhere.

***S!*:** How accurate did you find the TV show *Pistol*? Did you recognise its depictions of the band, Chrissie Hynde and Nick Kent?

AJ: It was better than expected, although some of the characterisations were rather awry and prone to caricature. Glenn Matlock was very poorly treated, but Sydney Chandler was sensational as Chrissie Hynde. By the end, it was surprisingly moving. Then again, I also liked *Vinyl*, hated by almost everyone else who watched it.

***S!*:** Roger Waters called you a "stupid shit" after your scathing live review of *The Wall*. Punk was dissipating, but there was still bloated and pompous rock. What music excited you in the transitional 1979 period?

AJ: In the late '70s to early '80s, I was listening a lot to The Specials (there's a long chapter on them in *Too Late To Stop Now*), Costello, Nick Lowe, The Pretenders, Squeeze, XTC, Talking Heads, The Replacements and all the stuff I'd been listening to since 1964. By '85, REM had spearheaded a revival of US rock. They were a musical lifeline for anyone not especially enamoured of the New Romantics, synth-pop and American stadium-rock and I was now listening to them, The Blasters, Los Lobos, Dream Syndicate, Violent Femmes, Husker Du, The Beat Farmers, Green On Red, Jason & The Scorchers, The Rain Parade and Rank And File.

***S!*:** Paul Gorman stated in *Totally Wired*: *The Rise & Fall Of The Music Press* that Britpop marked the death knell for music journalism. Also, according to Gorman, it was the period when music was looking to the past for inspiration rather than forward. In 1997 you launched the new glossy music monthly *Uncut*. Monthlies like *Select* and *Vox* had offered an indie alternative to Q, which debuted in '86, but were short-sighted and short-lived. *MOJO* followed in '93, with a hipper, more academic approach to rock journalism, featuring both contemporary and vintage acts. What were your aims when you launched *Uncut*? Where did you see the magazine sitting? And, in retrospect, do you agree with Gorman? Was Blur aping Madness and The Kinks less interesting than music prior to that, which always pushed forward?

AJ: I made the same point to *Melody Maker*'s publishers that Paul Gorman makes in *Totally Wired* about the ubiquity of Britpop coverage. You could read about Oasis and Blur in everything from *The Daily Mirror* and *The Sun* to *Nursing Times* and *Farmer's Weekly*. *MM*'s Britpop coverage often seemed superfluous. Our readers certainly thought so. Our circulation actually went down because of all the space we suddenly, at publishing

In a hot air balloon at Richard Branson's annual summer bash at The Manor, August 1976; Jones returns to The Alamo, this time with XTC

insistence, gave to Britpop. Readers clearly preferred *MM* when we were writing about Butthole Surfers rather than Blur. Punk had rudely rejected what rock had been – "No Beatles, Elvis or The Rolling Stones in 1977!" – with Year Zero as a way forward that Britpop turned into little island nostalgia and a parochial exceptionalism. It's not too much of an exaggeration to say that it later found a more extreme echo in Brexit. I was so disenchanted with music at the time that I originally proposed *Uncut* as a film magazine and only added music to the mix at the last moment.

***S!*:** When for you was the golden age of music journalism? Was the corporate '90s less interesting than the carefree '70s?
AJ: *Melody Maker* and *NME* were published for most of their lifetimes by IPC, in the '60s and '70s the largest publishing company in Europe. They were always part of a larger corporate business, so let's not get too misty eyed about an imagined past. Our various idiosyncrasies were tolerated only as long as we were selling issues. The '70s were certainly a golden age commercially for the music weeklies that sold almost a million issues between them and never sold as many again. When people describe it as similarly a golden age for rock journalism, I wonder if it's because of the unchaperoned access to writers like me had to even the biggest names of the day as much as the quality of the actual writing.

***S!*:** How do you see the future for music journalism and the surviving music monthlies?
AJ: I have friends who teach music journalism to classes full of eager young students who may as well be learning how to thatch roofs or shoe horses for all the practical use that they're being taught will be in their likely futures. I wish them all the best. The remaining music monthlies have learned to survive on drastically diminished circulations. In the early 2000s, *Uncut* had a monthly UK news stand sale of 75,000, with an equal international sale. It sells around 11-12,000 a month now, *MOJO* a little more. Advertising volume is similarly down and overall profits a fraction of what they were 20 years ago. Added to this, their collective readership is getting older and unlikely to be replaced by a younger constituency. My advice to anyone involved in writing, editing or publishing one of the current music titles is to enjoy it while it lasts.

***S!*:** Is there a digital future for music journalism? Streaming platforms like Qobuz are integrating reviews and articles into their content.
AJ: Possibly, for those lucky enough to get a place on the lifeboat and they don't end up contributing to a website that actually pays its contributors. But you have to ask what kind of journalism these platforms might be looking for. Would they tolerate the kind of wild opinion, often outrageously expressed, that was an essential part of the music weeklies for almost as long as they were around. Would Qobuz employ a Nick Kent or Charlie Murray, as *NME* famously did; or a Paul Morley, Ian Penman, David Cavanagh, Jon Savage, Viv Goldman, Jane Suck, Simon Reynolds, David Stubbs, Everett True or Neil Kulkarni? How much loquacious irreverence and swaggering pontification would they tolerate, let alone encourage?

As with the recently announced print relaunch of *NME*, these platforms are more likely looking for inoffensive retail journalism than volatile opinion, the kind probably destined to be easily replaced by AI programmes. What was what once so great about the music weeklies was how they gave a home – and even employment – to so many gifted misfits, rampant iconoclasts, provocateurs, a camaraderie of reckless souls probably unemployable in any other context. I stand here as some kind of evidence for that.

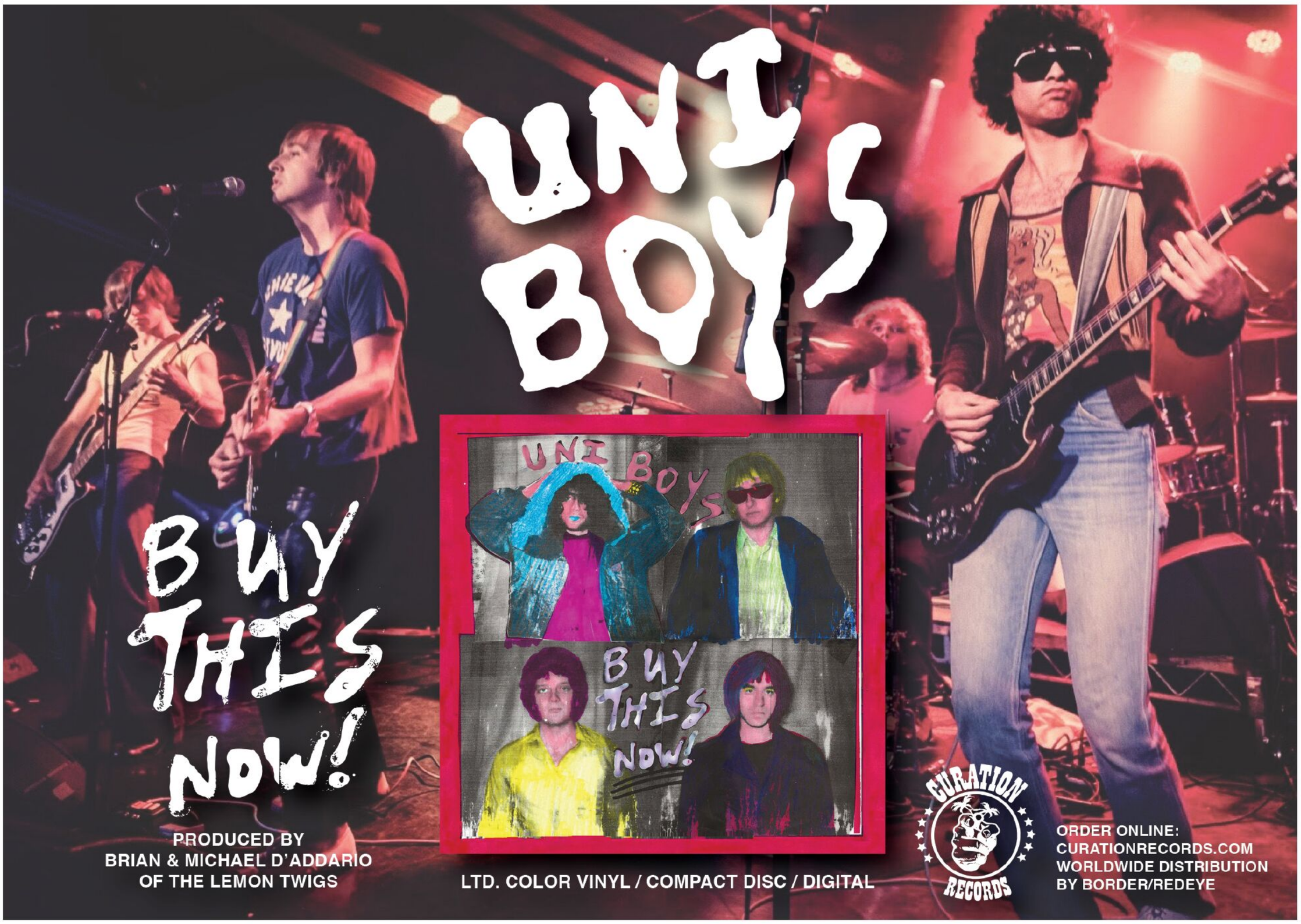
***S!*:** The last entry in the second instalment of your "rock 'n' roll stories" *Too Late To Stop Now* ends at a gig in a suburban London back street in 2021. What's changed in your many years of gig going? Green Man has grown. Glastonbury is insane. Blur played Wembley Stadium, and Macca and the Stones, not to mention Roger Waters, are still churning out shows to generations of adoring fans. What is rock and pop's future?
AJ: What's most obviously changed in my 40 years of gig-going in London is the lack of actual venues, the closing down of so many pubs and clubs that sustained the London gig circuit 40 years ago when there was somewhere every night in 1977 you could go to see Elvis Costello & The Attractions, Rockpile, The Clash, The Sex Pistols, The Damned, Johnny Thunders. Brexit has added all sorts of costs to lower-level American bands touring here, although the Americana scene continues to flourish thanks to the efforts of key promoters. Stadium shows, big outdoor events and the major festivals will continue to flourish for as long as audiences are prepared to pay increasingly exorbitant ticket prices and don't mind standing in a field watching the bands on screens. In the future, we might also expect the digital resurrection of legendary bands as avatars. How long before The Beatles, Bowie or Queen are touring again in the manner of ABBA's Voyage, a hologrammatic tomorrow I won't be sorry to miss. S!

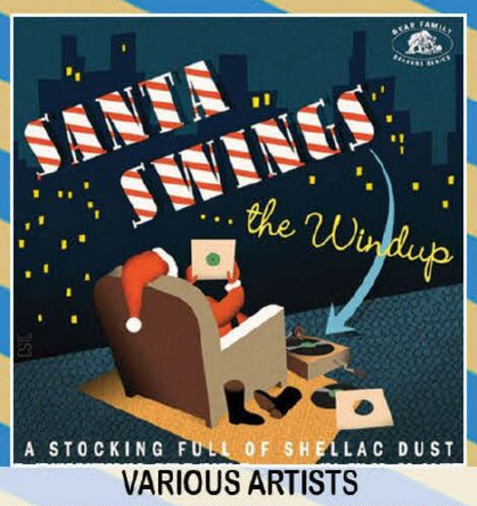
With thanks to Fiona McQuarrie

Too Late To Stop Now is published by Bloomsbury

"Van Morrison was very difficult. Gordon Lightfoot threatened to punch me. Tony Iommi did"

Jones with good friend Nick Lowe in 2020





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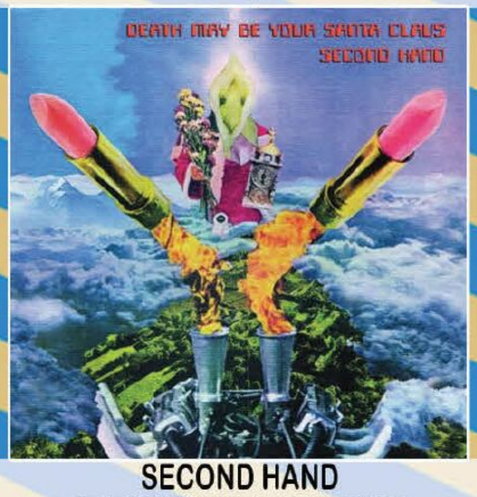

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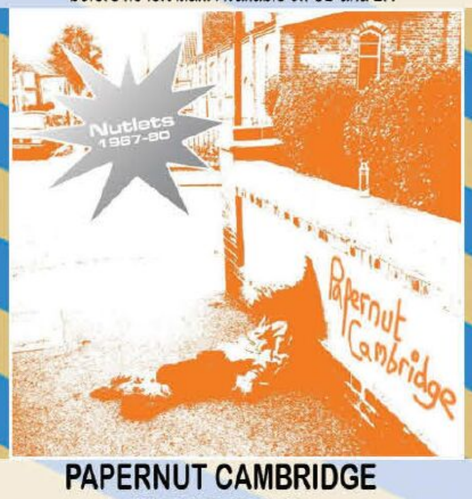

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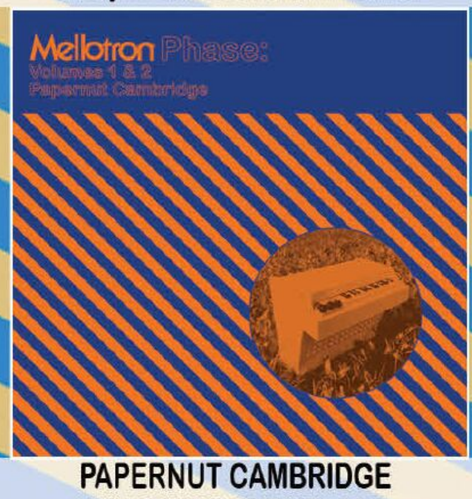

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Michelin starred. Grand Drive, late '90s. L-R: Danny Wilson, Ed Balch, Paul Wigens, Julian Wilson

MAY YOUR WHEELS RUN TRUE

LOOKING AT CONTEMPORARY REVIEWS OF **GRAND DRIVE**'S 2000 ALBUM *TRUE LOVE AND HIGH ADVENTURE*, YOU CAN'T HELP BUT BE STRUCK BY THE CALIBRE OF ARTISTS THE SOUTH LONDON BAND IS COMPARED TO: VAN MORRISON, THE BEACH BOYS, THE BAND, AL GREEN, NILSSON, THE EVERLY BROTHERS, GRAM PARSONS, DYLAN..., LIKE A WHO'S WHO OF *SHINDIG!* READERS' RECORD COLLECTIONS.

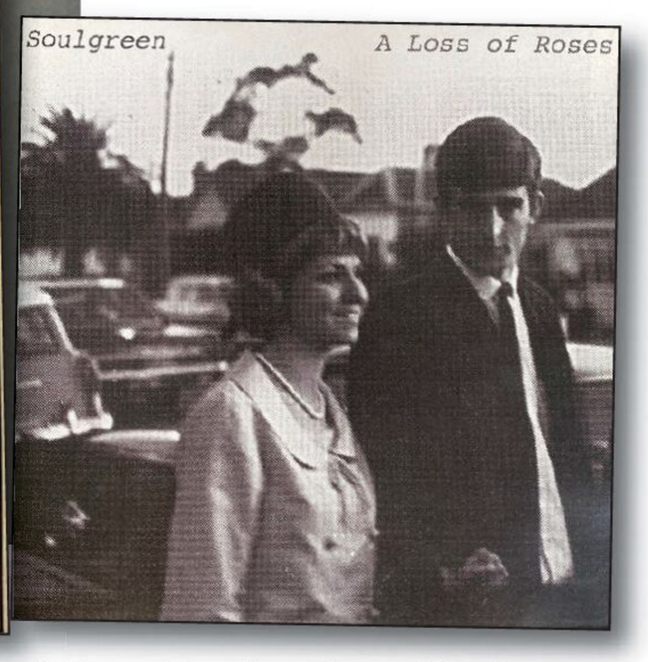
ANDREW URE TAKES A JOYRIDE WITH BAND LEADERS AND BROTHERS IN ARMS JULIAN AND DANNY WILSON, AND RIGHT-HAND MAN ED BALCH.

PORTRAIT BY BEN GRAVILLE

PHOTO BY PIERS BROMLEY

Brothers in arms Julian and Danny Wilson.; Soulgreen support the "inspiring' Uncle Tupelo; 1993 EP

"WE WERE LISTENING TO CLASSIC RECORDS – WE WEREN'T TRYING TO BE PART OF A SCENE"
JULIAN



"The kind of tunes an on-form David Crosby might have penned if he'd been raised in Croydon and not California" (*Daily Telegraph*, September 2000)

"Like Mercury Rev if they hailed from New Malden instead of New York" (*Melody Maker*, September 2000)

These two quotes give a solid idea of what to expect from one of the hidden gems of early noughties British music. It's an epic sounding album touching on Memphis soul, '70s rock, cosmic-country and spacey psychedelia. A record completely out of step with UK trends of the time but that has weathered perfectly. "We were listening to classic records, we weren't trying to be part of a scene," explains Julian. "We wanted to make it like a film," adds Danny, citing legendary film score composer Ennio Morricone as an influence. Listening to the album in 2023 it's fair to say they succeeded. *True Love* is a soundtrack for outsiders, and long overdue a reappraisal.

The Wilson brothers grew up in Sutton, Surrey, sons of Australians who'd moved to the UK in the early '70s. Three years older than Danny, Julian started playing double bass and piano in his early teens, handling keyboards in college band Indian Rope Men (namechecking Brian Auger via Richie Havens) while studying at Oxford Polytechnic. Danny started playing solo acoustic shows of original material in his mid-teens, with a brief stint in a thrash band in the late '80s.

In 1992 they formed Soulgreen with bass player Ed Balch, a Suffolk native and virtuoso guitarist who could play Iron Maiden solos note for note. Ed knew Julian from Oxford Poly and was now living in London. When the pair bumped into each other again Julian mentioned he was forming a band with his brother, and would Ed want to play bass? "I was like, I'm a guitarist so I'm not really interested," remembers Ed. "But he talked me into it." A session was arranged with Ed borrowing a bass. "Ed was such a good musician, the first session he had with us he played a fretless bass and from that day anything we wanted done and couldn't do, he did," adds Julian. Danny agrees. "Plus, he had a falsetto voice which fitted in with the harmonies really well."

Ed bought a bass, Martin Gregory – older brother of a high school friend of the Wilsons – was brought in on drums, and Soulgreen began performing Danny and Julian's songs. Gregory was soon replaced by Mick Lee, several years older than the rest, and who had previously drummed for Nik Turner's Inner City Unit. A six-song demo tape was recorded at RMS studios in Croydon, leading to a publishing deal with a subsidiary of Beggars Banquet. Two more demo tapes were followed by their first official release: a three-song 12-inch on Deva records. Produced by guitarist James Stevenson of Chelsea/Generation X, the '93 recordings find the group in powerpop/Elvis Costello territory. A-side 'A Loss Of Roses' was a live favourite, but 30 years later Danny prefers flipside 'My Favourite Film'. With its unexpected stop/start structure and driving guitar sound it's easy to see why.

Soulgreen travelled the UK opening for bands like Uncle Tupelo, The Barenaked Ladies and Green On Red. Touring with Uncle Tupelo was particularly inspiring. The music the brothers were writing started to take on an alt-country bent and in '95, they retired the Soulgreen moniker to re-brand themselves. "We decided Grand Drive was going to be a bit more widescreen than what we'd been before," says Danny. Once the Wilsons were happy with their new songs the band went back into RMS to record what Julian calls "the first stuff we didn't consider demos".

Danny pawned a guitar to help pay for the self-produced two-day session. Julian had been side-gigging as the touring keyboardist for Britpop band Gene since the previous year, and Gene's producer Phil Vinall and engineer Pete Hoffman mixed some of the 12 tracks recorded at RMS. In '97 'Tell It Like It Is' from the sessions became the first Grand Drive

Ed, Julian, Danny and Paul; 1999's *Road Music*

PHOTO BY PIERS BROMLEY

release on indie label Václav.

A superb debut, with *Big Pink* echoes and the perfectly blended harmonies only siblings can deliver, reviews were very positive. *NME* made it their single of the week. It didn't really sell, but A&M, who funded Václav, were sufficiently impressed to offer a deal. Almost immediately A&M was bought by Seagram and dissolved, "And that was the end of that," says Danny. Despite the setback, more recordings were made in a fancy studio with Phil Vinall producing. The band didn't like them, so they were scrapped, and instead they went into Matt Johnson's (The The) studio with Pete Hoffman co-producing and engineering. This partnership resulted in two new EPs, both released in '98. 'On A Good Day' on Václav continued the vibe of the debut with a dose of Teenage Fanclub powerpoppiness. For the next one the band signed to alt-country label Loose and recruited a new drummer, Paul Wigens. "Wrong Notes was a game changer," says Ed, and indeed it was a taste of things to come, but we'll get to that in a minute.

Loose decided to compile the tracks from the three previous releases with a couple of left-over RMS recordings, and in '99 the full-length *Road Music* was released. The EPs had gone down well with the press but collecting them together seemed to create a whole bigger than the sum of its parts. "*Road Music* is a modern classic," opined *The Times*, giving it 9/10. The *NME* gave it the same score, calling it "an unreservedly recommended treat". *Hi-Fi News* predicted the band "should have no problem finding a couple of million people to sing along with them". Highest praise of all came from *The Guardian,* which floated them as a candidate for the coveted Mercury Prize and predicted "Grand Drive could have their own swimming pool in two months' time."

Road Music is a stunningly good collection, beautifully performed and brimming with ideas drawn from the well of classic rock. But since it's not the focus of this article we're going to skip to the last track, the previously mentioned 'Wrong Notes', which also happens to be the final song recorded for the album. "It was definitely leading to where we were going," says Julian. Born from Danny, Julian and Ed sitting around with acoustic guitars, it's a fragile web of gentle finger picking, Fender Rhodes trills and cosmic slide. The Wilsons share singing duties, with Danny's taut vocals and Julian's laid-back delivery providing the perfect counterpoint as they alternate verses and then meld together in harmony. At close to seven minutes, it's longer and more experimental than anything they'd recorded up to this point. The band had discovered a sonic world they wanted to explore further.

With the momentum of critical acclaim, festival appearances (Glastonbury, Reading, etc.), and a new publishing deal with Chrysalis, the band got to work crafting material that would form their first album proper. "We just played and played and worked on arrangements," says Julian. Ed's abiding memory is how soulful the band sounded playing the new material in the rehearsal studio with drums, bass, guitar and keyboards. When it came time to record the new songs, however, the instrumentation became a lot more ambitious.

Opting to produce themselves, and eschewing the fancier studios they'd spent time in with Vinall and Hoffman, the band returned to RMS. To embellish the basic tracks, the older brother of a friend was brought in. David Hackbridge Johnson, an accomplished violinist and composer who has since had symphonies recorded by The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, developed the brass and string arrangements, and helped the Wilsons realise the musical ideas in their heads. Johnson played all the string parts himself and arranged for musician friends to play brass and woodwinds. Studio owner Andy Le Vien engineered the sessions and Danny remembers pushing him with nigh-impossible requests like making the snare sound like a Willie Mitchell record. Le Vien indulged them though, and it must be said the quality of sound he captured on the 16-track two-inch tape is fantastic.

The sessions also saw the group leaning

Danny, Tom Bridgewater, Mark Rogers, Ed and Julian see in the new millennium, January 2000; the same year's *True Love And High Adventure*

into their multi-instrumentalism. Ed played all the EBowed guitar and some Mellotron; Julian ripped out a guitar solo; Danny played Farfisa. Anyone could come up with a part on any instrument. Danny sang lead on most of the songs, his yearning, rawer delivery balanced out by Julian's more subdued, relaxed tone on a handful of songs. Harmonies abound everywhere, with Ed adding the highest parts on top of the brotherly blend. After 21 days in the studio, the band had recorded 15 songs. Due to the complexity of sounds mixing proved difficult. Two attempts were made by the band before Pete Hoffman was brought back in for a third, and it was only considered finished when money ran out. Nine songs were completed and sequenced, almost 52 minutes of music. In keeping with its cinematic feel, the album's title was borrowed from the book of the film *The Princess Bride*, which bore the subtitle "A Classic Tale Of True Love And High Adventure". The result is a majestic album. That it was self-produced in what was essentially a demo studio with musical favours pulled in from friends, and friends of friends, is incredible. It's Tupelo Honey recorded at Muscle Shoals by The Faces. It's hymnal and graceful. Panoramic and melancholic. It's dense but somehow full of space. It's really flipping great.

True Love And High Adventure opener 'Wheels' starts the journey in a cozy, relaxing way. The Nilsson-like chord structure picks up where *Road Music* left off and Julian's comforting lead vocal lulls you into a false sense of "I-know-what-this-album-is-gonna-be-like". 'A Ladder To The Stars' suggests otherwise with a jagged lead guitar and swelling atmosphere. Both tracks would become singles in due course. The title track is perfectly sublime, like a Tennessean Spiritualized. Piano-led 'A Little Numb' sounds like a classic lost '70s Californian torch song. The fuzzy, mind-melting solo on 'Nobody's Song in Particular' evokes peak Crazy Horse-era Neil Young. Album closer 'One Last Parade' sounds like the theme to a circus falling off the edge of the world. Calling out individual tracks doesn't do it justice though, and it really should be consumed whole.

While many reviews were ecstatic, it's interesting to notice that some were lukewarm, and the verdict wasn't as unanimous as for *Road Music*. With drawn out song structures, unexpected pop music instrumentation and a hard-to-pigeonhole quality, it's not surprising some reviewers' boats weren't floated. But those who got it, gushed. *Select* magazine's five-star review suggested: "Listen to them and wait for someone to scrape you off the floor." *The Telegraph* labelled it, "A quite beautiful combination of breezy, early '70s West Coast harmonising and late '90s Jayhawks-style country-rock… precisely the kind of music British bands aren't supposed to make."

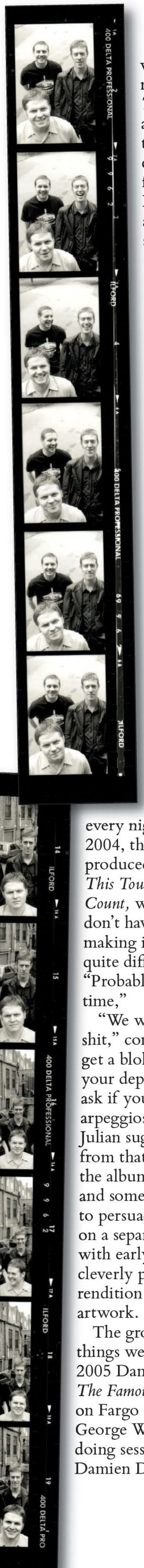
Such a lush record wasn't going to be easy to translate to a live setting though.

"We didn't think about playing *True Love* live until we had to do it," reflects Julian, "and then it was really hard."

Brass players were hired for a couple of London gigs, but that was about it. Being on an indie label meant tour support was sparse. All that suddenly seemed like it could change though. Almost immediately after *True Love* appeared BMG signed the band and reissued it. The band asked if it could be on RCA Victor and were very surprised when the label agreed. The only other acts on that imprint were Elvis and Morrisey, so the lads were in good company. The band toured the UK as a four piece to promote the re-release and Danny, Julian and Ed also did a national tour of radio stations with just acoustic guitars. The three of them agree this was as much fun as they ever had in the band, travelling around in a Peugeot estate borrowed from the Wilsons' parents, staying in bed and breakfasts, boozing it up and generally being merry pranksters. Ed laughs, "We'd always leave a sausage at breakfast, somewhere strategic." Gigging continued with shows in the UK and Europe opening for Mercury Rev, whose '98 album *Deserter's Songs* is probably the best record from the era you can point to when explaining to a Grand Drive virgin the scope and ambition of *True Love*.

In 2001 BMG reissued *Road Music*. Two new EPs were also released, the first featuring a radio edit of 'Wheels' and the

"WE WERE DEEP IN MAJOR LABEL SHIT. YOU'D GET A BLOKE WHO WAS THE HEAD OF YOUR DEPARTMENT COME IN AND ASK IF YOU COULD PUT SOME PIANO ARPEGGIOS LIKE COLDPLAY ON IT"
DANNY



second a radio edit of 'A Ladder To The Stars'. Both contained more tracks from the *True Love* sessions. Again, reviews were good, but for whatever reason critical acclaim wasn't translating to barcode scans at cash registers. So, for their next recordings a producer was assigned by the label. Guitarist Jim Cregan had worked with household names like Rod Stewart and Cockney Rebel. Perhaps most impressively to *Shindig!* readers he'd been in UK psych giants Blossom Toes. In May 2002 he produced the group's first actual major label album, *See The Morning In*. It's a good sounding record, but the group weren't allowed to be as experimental or throw as many ideas at the wall as before. "It was more like grown-ups doing a grown-up record," states Julian. 'It's much tidier," concludes Danny, "and I think we'd have liked it to have had a few more loose ends and be a bit more adventurous if we're honest." The songs are as good as any they'd written, particularly 'Firefly' and 'A Little Like You', but the execution is more reserved.

"You could feel the difference between being on an independent label and being on a major label," explains Danny, with one major difference being they got to tour the USA in 2003. Strangely this wasn't to support their new album, because *See The Morning In* didn't actually get released in the USA. Instead, a compilation of tracks from the three European albums appeared on American shelves, simply titled *Grand Drive,* featuring a surfer dude on the front. "It's hilarious that there's a bloke on the cover that isn't us," laughs Danny. "I've never listened to it top to bottom," adds Julian, non-plussed. *Shindig!* has listened the whole way through, and it's actually solid. But it's not as good as either *Road Music* or *True Love*.

See The Morning In earned the band the "UK Americana" tag and a tour with The Jayhawks made perfect sense. "When we did The Jayhawks tour, their fans didn't know who we were and we sold shed loads of CDs," Ed recalls. Julian and Danny would even join the Minnesotans on stage every night for a few songs. In 2004, the Malcom Burn produced album, *The Lights In This Town Are Too Many To Count,* was released. The band don't have the best memories of making it. "I found that record quite difficult," says Julian. "Probably not the best fit at that time,"

"We were deep in major label shit," considers Danny. "You'd get a bloke who was the head of your department come in and ask if you could put some piano arpeggios like Coldplay on it." Julian suggests that the demos from that album were better than the album. Indeed, they were, and somehow the band managed to persuade BMG to release them on a separate CD given away with early copies of the album, cleverly packaged in a dot-to-dot rendition of the official album's artwork.

The group soldiered on, but things were winding down. In 2005 Danny's first solo album *The Famous Made Mile* appeared on Fargo under the name Danny George Wilson. Julian started doing session work for artists like Damien Dempsey and Andrea Corr. The *True Love* story wasn't quite over though, with BMG releasing *Being Alive – Loose Wheels & Latchkeys 2000-2005*. Rounding up B-sides, EP tracks and outtakes such as the excellent *True Love* leftovers 'Holding On' and 'The Fair Goes Slow', described by Danny as the band "trying to do a Chet Baker / Bill Evans thing". Julian and Danny both wish it had made the album, but at the time they didn't have the money to finish it. *Being Alive* hangs together way better than it should and it's up there with the first two full lengths. "It was put out because we knew RCA wasn't our natural place," explains Danny, "so while we had some good will we wanted people to hear the stuff that would otherwise be sitting on DAT tapes in our Mum and Dad's garage."

In 2006 the band were dropped by BMG. "By the end no one was upset that it was over," reflects Danny. They returned to Loose for one final album. *Everyone* (2007) was self-produced and recorded back on their own turf at Julian's own studio in Crystal Palace, with new drummer Ben Wiesner. "It was our version of Wilco's *Loft,*" says Danny. The brother's both consider it their best album. It got good reviews, but they didn't really promote it, doing just two gigs before calling it a day. Danny has continued in music ever since, releasing nine (nine!) albums as Danny & The Champions Of The World and most recently two albums with new group Bennet Wilson Poole. Their 2023 release *I Saw A Star Behind Your Eyes, Don't Let It Die Away* is a delightful country/folk/psychedelic brew that will suit the ears of many of our readers. In the last few years there's been talk of Grand Drive reissues. *Road Music* got as far as being remastered at Abbey Road, along with a seven-inch EP containing four previously unheard out-takes from the time. "We listened to it and it sounded great," says Julian, yet the project fizzled out.

Looking back today on the epic journey that was Grand Drive, the Wilsons and Ed are clearly happy with what they accomplished and that they stayed true to themselves. "We absolutely were not trying to jump on any bandwagon," states Julian. "'Tell It Like It Is' and 'Jukebox' were recorded in 1995 when it was all Blur and Oasis." "I'm always really proud that I'm still making music," Danny happily closes, "that is related to what we started off doing." Despite being on the most major of labels with proper budgets, "We made our most expansive album on a shoestring," says Julian. *True Love And High Adventure* stands as a testament to what can be achieved when you shoot for the stars fuelled by enthusiasm. It's the unlikeliest of albums: a shimmering, bejewelled opus from the tatty streets of Croydon. We suggest you start there, then give *Road Music* and the rest of Grand Drive's legacy some of the attention it deserves. S!

THE BIRD IS THE WORD!

Exploding out of Paris in 1965 like a one-man Rolling Stones, **RONNIE BIRD** had it all: cool, hip cachet, impeccable musical taste, top-class musicians, and a perfect feel for the progressive R&B sounds pouring across the channel. The first and best French performer to truly get to grips with British beat, he should've been a superstar, but somehow it never quite happened. Instead, after five years of stellar releases, he disappeared, leaving a legend that continues to grow. **GARETH JONES** sifts through the memories and discovers a remarkable catalogue

Born to a middle-class family in Paris in 1946, Ronald Méhu became an anglophile at an early age, making frequent trips to London and developing both a comfortable familiarity with the English language and a love of rock 'n' roll. Looking back, Ronnie recalled, "The music that hooked me at the start was Ritchie Valens, Jerry Lee Lewis, and especially Little Richard, because it had great energy. It was the same music that I liked later, the rhythm & blues that came a bit from the church, but via rock 'n' roll." Blown away in '64 by The Rolling Stones, whose style and pounding R&B attack made a powerful impression on the young Frenchman, he returned to Paris and set about becoming a singer himself, later remembering, "Singing was the only attractive option that might have allowed me to be reborn in a different world from the one that I was in." Sporting long hair and Carnaby Street fashion well before it became commonplace, he found himself at the forefront of a new generation of performers.

"Singing was the only attractive option that might have allowed me to be reborn." Ronnie Bird, late 1965

Johnny Hallyday was already reworking R&B songs into French in 1964, but his sartorial style looked old hat compared with the sharply-attired newcomer. Offstage, Ronald Méhu was shy and reserved: onstage as Ronnie Bird, he blew up a storm with fiery, uncompromising performances and a non-stop sonic assault, backed variously by Les Blazers, Les Stormbeats and Les Rebelles. Banging a tambourine, shaking his head and prowling the stage *à la* Mick Jagger won Bird instant adoration from Parisian teenagers and his performances at the Golf Drouot and Bilboquet clubs made him the hottest draw in town. Decca were quick to spot his potential, signing him to a deal in the spring, with expatriate American Mickey Baker (of Mickey & Sylvia fame) at the deck for his first sessions.

Compared with his frenzied live show, the June '64 EP sounded somewhat muted, paying tribute to Ronnie's first idol with 'Adieu à un ami' (Mike Berry's 'Tribute To Buddy Holly') and looking back to the '50s on 'Dis aux montagnes' (Johnnie & Joe's 'Over The Mountain, Across The Sea'). 'Tu ferais mieux de filer' was adapted from the Mitchell Jeaves song 'Run Back Home' but it was the piercing guitar solo on the original 'On s'aime en secret' that was the disc's highlight. Following this subdued debut, Ronnie stole the show at the Fête de la Libération and then brought the house down at the anniversary celebrations for radio show/magazine *Salut Les Copains*, but for all that, remembered Ronnie, "I think I must have sold 5,000 copies." It was a start.

For his all-important second EP (the French preferred EPs to singles until the late '60s), Ronnie rearranged The Crickets' 'Love's Made A Fool Of You' in the manner of the Stones' version of 'Not Fade Away'. With maracas underpinning the driving rhythm, bass, guitar and organ pounding out the central riff and an incisive lyric from Claude Righi, 'L'amour nous rend fou' was a revelation, leaping out of the speakers. The rest of the EP was even better, with Bird howling, snarling and wailing over the bluesy 'Pour toi' while 'Tout seul' played around with the chord changes from 'Hi-Heel Sneakers' and 'Je ne mens pas' married Bird's R&B raunch to a catchy organ riff and biting guitar runs from Baker. As Ronnie later put it, "I was a fan of the blues, which I tried to introduce musically, like the English bands made their rough versions of black American blues, because we were far from the source. In the beginning, that's mainly what I did and that's what I liked to sing on stage."

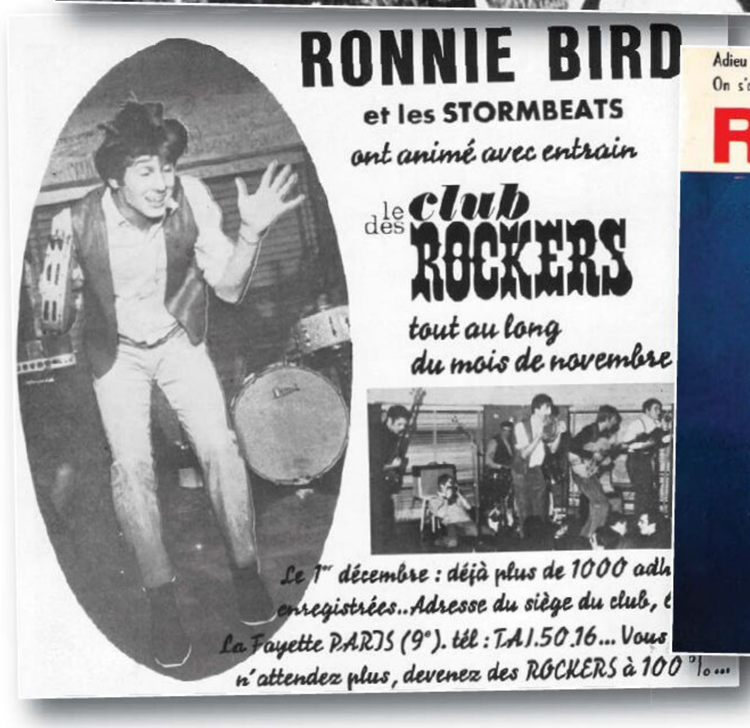
After rapturous coverage in *Disco Revue* and a storming run of gigs at the Golf Drouot, the record was adopted by *Salut Les Copains*, resulting in a modest hit over the winter. A first TV appearance on *Junior Cocktail* on 6th February '65 was a nervous affair but the following day Ronnie was in his element as opening act for Chuck Berry. A powerhouse treatment of 'Route 66' (in English) was released in the '90s; despite the rough sound, it proves just how good he was on stage.

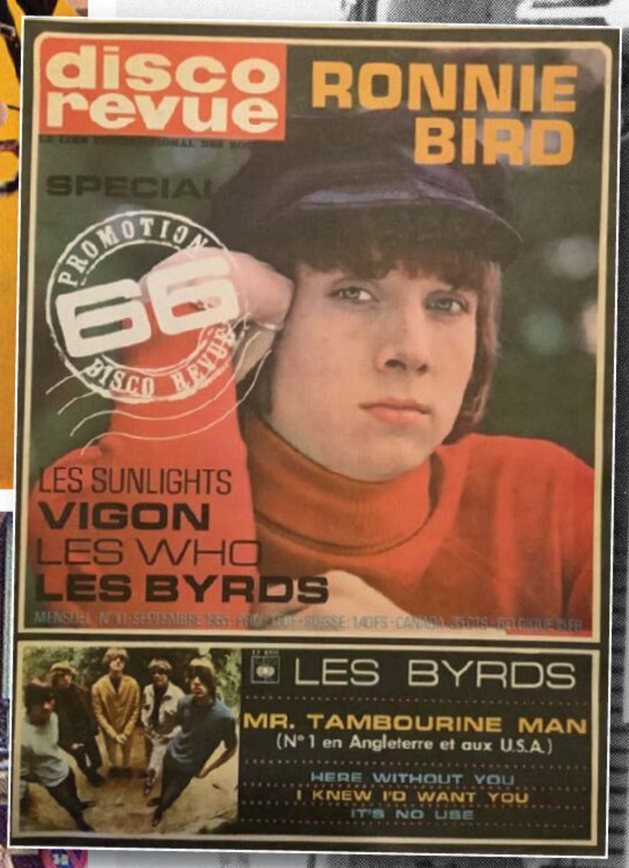
For his third EP in May '65, he pulled out all the stops. 'Elle m'attend!' took on the Stones' 'The Last Time', Ronnie's vocal overflowing with confidence, shouldered by tight backing from his new band Les Tarés, who effortlessly replicated the original's circular riff and stood tall against the original – no mean feat. The rest of the EP simply sizzled: 'Tu perds ton temps', (The Pretty Things' 'Don't Bring Me Down'), 'Pour être à (the Stones' 'Down Home Girl') and, best of all, 'Fais attention' (The Nashville Teens' 'Find My Way Back Home'), which exploded in a flurry of guitars, a double-tracked vocal, pounding drums and a manic piano solo as Bird took the original version and kicked its arse all the way home. One of the best recordings in a year renowned for quality releases, it joined 'Elle m'attend!' on the airwaves, the EP becoming his biggest seller to date.

Now a name, if not exactly a star, Ronnie was the first public representation of a new Parisian in-crowd, 'La Bande du Drugstore' (after their hangout on the Champs Elysées). French rock 'n' roll fans had chosen the Golf Drouot as their temple but the hip young things preferred Le

> **"In the choice of records, it was always a compromise to try to find something that was new, a bit commercial and which at the same time lent itself to adaptation"**

Ronnie on stage at Golf-Drouot, Paris, 1964; recordings with Les Tares, '65; press ads; debut EP and album





Get stuffed! Ronnie with rodent friend, 1966; fashion shoot with Zouzou, '66 (note man with fox); '65 magazine cover; outside La Locomotive club, Paris

Drugstore, abandoning biker jackets for UK fashion (modelled, of course, on French designs). Listening to UK R&B groups or American soul music, La Bande were the capital's mods, and the gang came to include, formally or otherwise, future film-makers (Donald Cammell), models (Amanda Lear), actresses (Anita Pallenberg), singers (Nico) and many others who would make their marks in the arts. Ronnie was the first to break cover, his explosive performances threatening to shake up the French music industry.

A shake up was certainly needed. As Ronnie described it, "I went on tour with (folk singer) Hugues Aufray and Françoise Hardy... opening the curtain, just after Éric Charden. I didn't fit with the rest of the line-up. The few people who came to see me really hated the rest of the show, and vice versa… I knew we shouldn't have been there." Indeed, while Ronnie was storming stages on that summer '65 tour, radio was disgorging a ceaseless wave of romantic balladeers – Christophe, Hervé Vilard, Adamo – whose fans had little interest in Ronnie's records, but a string of TV appearances made him a hero to rock fans across the country. A self-titled debut LP (wrapping up his three EPs) appeared in the summer and in September he was on the bill for PJ Proby's Paris shows (a rough but exciting performance of 'Fais attention' would surface in the '90s).

Already the country's best purveyor of R&B, his next release slashed the opposition into ribbons. With snarling, savage guitar work, blueswailing harmonica and a vocal that blasted the roof off the building, 'Où va-t-elle' tore apart The Hollies' 'Come On Back' and remade it in Ronnie's own image. He performed a similar demolition job on The Turtles' 'Almost There' ('Ce maudit journal'), a ballsy blueswailer with stomping drums, rumbling bass and crackling guitar over which he stalked and strutted like an arrogant peacock. 'Ma vie s'enfuit' showed Ian Whitcomb how 'This Sporting Life' was *meant* to be sung, while 'Je voudrais dire' (James Brown's 'I'll Go Crazy', inspired by The Moody Blues' version) was another driving slice of primal rock. The record was Ronnie's biggest radio hit to date but sales were less than might have been expected, prompting him to defect to Philips in search of better commercial rewards.

Ronnie ruefully reflected, "I didn't sell a lot, 35-40,000 at the most. I was badly distributed. It's hard to maintain a group in those conditions." Indeed, Les Tarés jumped ship, mutating into Les Problèmes and backing a new sensation, the scandalously long-haired Antoine. Something about the former student turned Dylan-esque folk-rocker rubbed Bird the wrong way, and the two had a stormy relationship during shared concert dates early in '66. When the newcomer took on French society (and Johnny Hallyday) head-on with his spring hit 'Les élucubrations d'Antoine', Bird was ready to respond. As Ronnie put it, "Antoine... annoyed me a bit, but I could say that about many others. There are always newcomers pushing through from behind."

Adapted from Them's 'I Can Only Give You Everything', 'Chante' castigated his rival, taunting him that singing about Vietnam while wearing a floral shirt did

1967 promo photo; fashion shoot with Erick Saint-Laurent

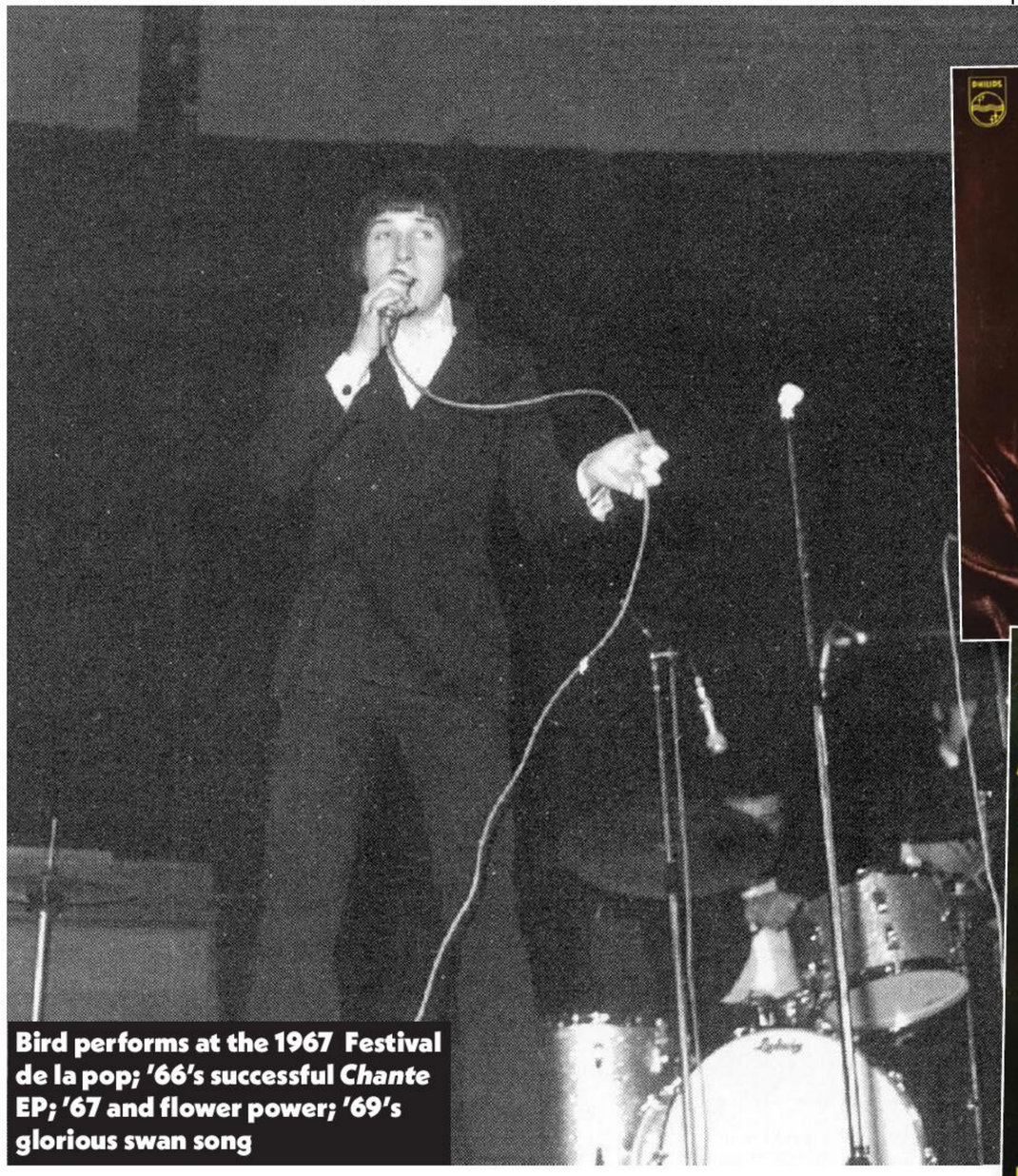
not make him a beatnik. This reactionary broadside was musically superb, with fuzz guitar riff, stomping drums and a superb organ solo. Once again, the rest of the EP was up to the mark: a decent cover of The Who's 'A Legal Matter' ('Ne t'en fais pas pour Ronnie'), a raucous assault on The Knickerbockers' 'Lies' ('Cheese') and a bluesy reworking of The Everly Brothers' 'So Sad (To Watch Good Love Go Bad)' ('Cette maudite solitude'). Buoyed by the media interest in the Hallyday-Antoine spat, it was Ronnie's biggest-ever hit, although a reputed sales figure of 100,000 seems dubious.

For the follow-up, Ronnie borrowed guitarist Micky Jones and drummer Tommy Brown from Hallyday's band, together crafting the astonishing 'N'écoute pas ton cœur'. A certifiable freakbeat classic, this was a savage mod-rocker, complete with sizzling Yardbirds-like guitar runs from Jones, and was Ronnie's best recording to date. After a tip of the hat to folk-rock with 'Seul dans la nuit' (The Beach Boys' 'Sloop John B'), the EP was completed by covers of The Small Faces' 'Hey Girl' and the Stones' 'Blue Turns To Grey' ('Ça n'est pas vrai'). Of this eclectic mix, Ronnie later noted, "In the choice of records, it was always a compromise to try to find something that was new, a bit commercial and which at the same time lent itself to adaptation. I wanted the choice of studio and musicians, which is essential to have the sound. The ideal in my head was to have the means to go and record in England." With the record in the racks, Ronnie, now backed by Les Hoppies, took to the road for a summer tour (a live version of 'Chante' surfaced in the '90s), an event marred by a serious road accident that left him with a hefty bill for the band's medical expenses.

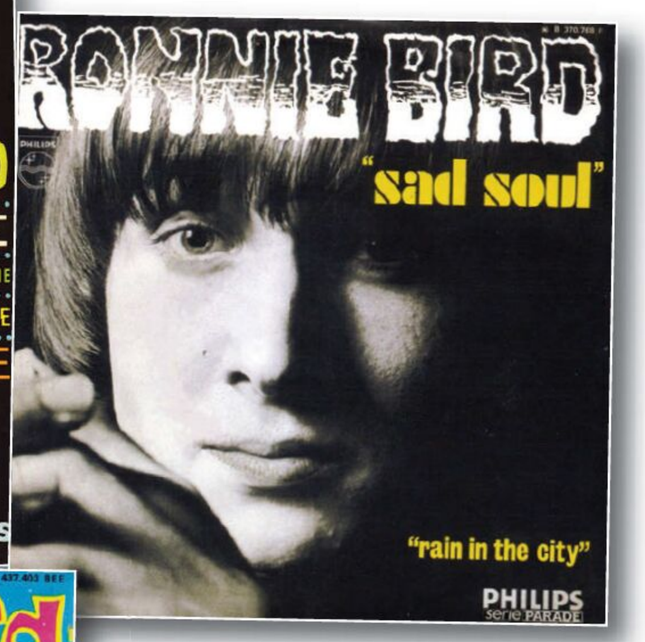
Despite this publicity, sales were back down to his earlier level, with the R&B boom fading as James Brown and Otis Redding propelled the soul train through Paris. Ronnie was an eager convert, decamping to London to cut some soul tunes that Philips sat on for months while the singer played shows in Canada; as Ronnie put later put it, "The previous 45 having not sold enough, management was in no hurry to let me make another!" Three soul tunes finally surfaced in May '67 (a cover of Mitch Ryder's 'Jenny Take A Ride' remains unreleased), with 'Tu ne sais pas' and Sam & Dave's 'You Don't Know Like I Know' ('Tu en dis trop') and Edwin Starr's 'Headline News' ('C'est un hold-up)' showing he could cut it as a soul singer (the fourth track, the ballad 'Je serre les poings', stuck out like a sore thumb). On 1st June, Ronnie was in his element at the Festival de Pop Music (performances of 'C'est un hold up' and Otis Redding's 'Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa (Sad Song)' emerged in the '90s), and a TV appearance on *Bouton Rouge* was a hoot. Despite the promotion, the record flopped.

Soul music was a commercial dead end, but psychedelia offered greater potential so Ronnie turned back to Jones and Brown to craft his eighth EP, issued only two months later. The opening 'La surprise' had a bright, sunshine-pop feel, but it was the pop-psych 'Les filles en sucre d'orge' that got him back in the charts, lifted by a catchy, keyboard-driven tune, risqué "free love" lyrics and an inventive rhythm, taking the best from *Sgt Pepper* and fusing it with the sounds of the American West Coast. Two covers completed the release: 'Ne me promets rien' (Tim Hardin's 'Don't Make Promises') and 'Si quelque chose m'arrivait', transformed The Bee Gees' 'New York Mining Disaster, 1941' into a pop-psych masterpiece, complete with phased drums, sitars and tabla. A mid-table hit, the EP kept Ronnie's name alive in the marketplace and cemented his working relationship with Jones and Brown.

Resolving henceforth to rely only on original material, Ronnie asked Jones and Brown to compose four songs (using various lyricists: Long Chris, Gérard Rinaldi and Ronnie himself) for his ninth EP, issued just before Christmas. 'Le



Bird performs at the 1967 Festival de la pop; '66's successful *Chante* EP; '67 and flower power; '69's glorious swan song



pivert' was superb sunshine-pop, with a cello arrangement underpinning a joyous vocal performance miles from the snarling fury of two years earlier. 'De l'autre côté du miroir' was another dreamy pop-psych effort and 'Aimez-moi' was clearly inspired by The Beatles' recent studio experiments, while the crackling 'SOS mesdemoiselles' returned the singer to his rocking roots. Brilliantly orchestrated by Hallyday's keyboardist Raymond Donnez (future Eurodisco star Don Ray), the risqué 'Le pivert' survived a radio ban to become his biggest hit since his glory days as Ronnie took to the road again with his latest band, future prog-rockers Cruciferius.

Ronnie was so enamoured by his new recordings that he made a serious attempt to poach Jones and Brown away from Hallyday, later recalling, "We recorded together but we never played on stage. Mick was a very good songwriter and a good producer. I had hoped that Mick, Tommy and I could form a band together," even taking up bass so they could assault the international market as a trio. The English pair had long been issuing their own records on the side, and Ronnie made an ideal frontman for the pair's work. After abandoning a plan to rework 'Le pivert' into English, Ronnie recalled, "I went to New York in '68 to try to negotiate a contract with Mercury, taking with me the recordings in English I had just cut in Paris with Micky and Tommy." The label passed. Disappointed, he returned to Paris, with the first fruits of the sessions instead appearing on a late '68 French 45 (EPs were being phased out in an effort to counter a flood of imported singles following the launch of The Common Market). 'Rain In The City' kicked off with the piano riff from the Stones' 'We Love You' before developing into an atmospheric slice of pop with horns, keyboards and biting guitars while 'Sad Soul' was an excellent excursion into eastern-tinged pop-psych. Radio gifted the latter a few spins, but with both sides sung in English, there was none of the interest that had greeted his earlier releases.

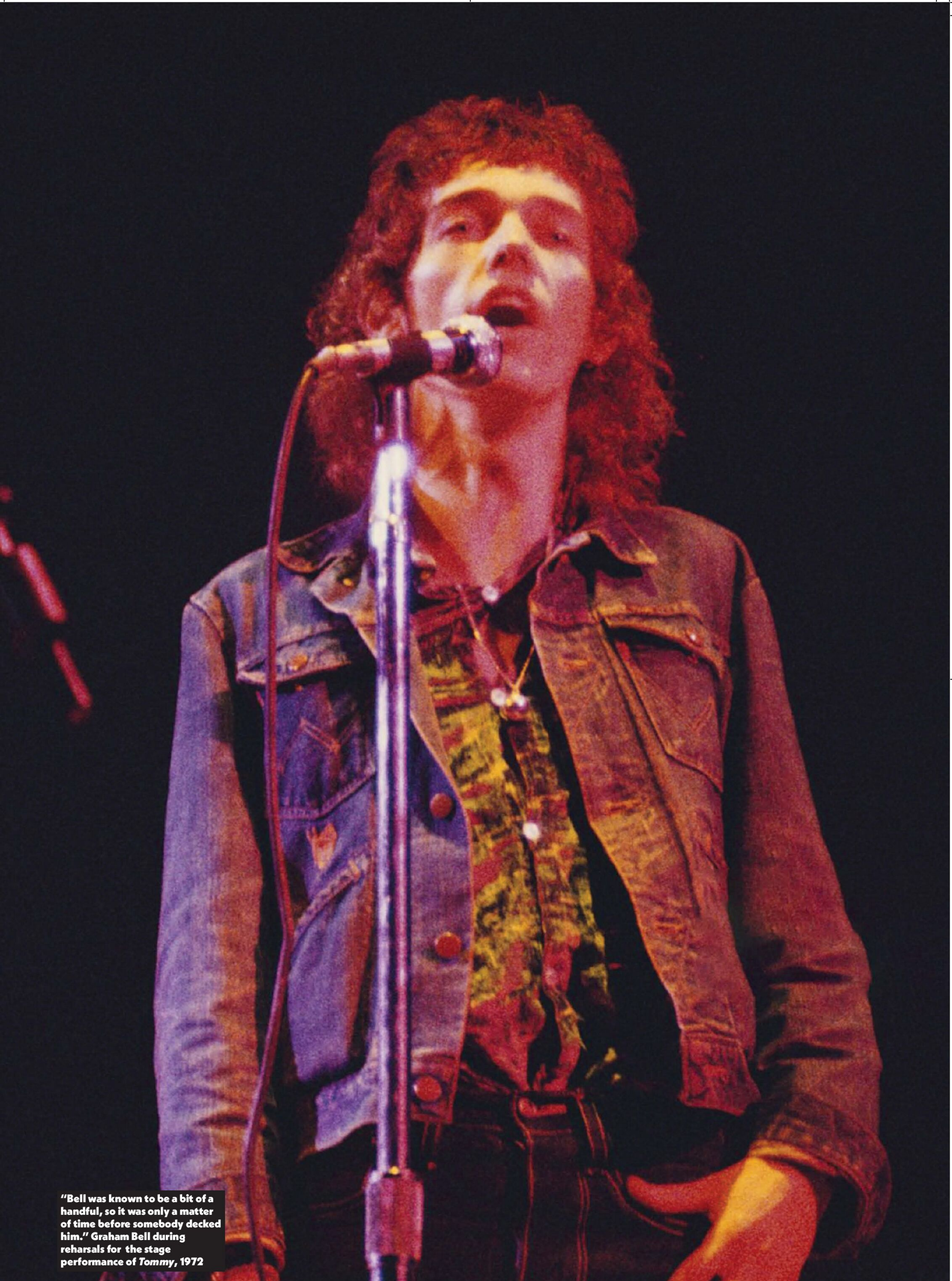
> "I wanted the choice of **studio** and **musicians**, which is essential to have the sound. The ideal in my head was to have the means to go and record in **England**"

Despite this setback, Bird, Jones and Brown pressed ahead with elaborate plans for an album. Ronnie looked back enthusiastically. "I had started to write a rock opera, for which I wanted to involve Micky and Tommy. We met to discuss it, I wrote about 10 songs and then tried to get some (financial) support to move the project forward." But time was running out. Still facing bills from the road accident back in '66 and in serious need of money, Ronnie threw in the towel in '69 and joined the French cast of *Hair*, remaining with the show for three years before signing up for *Jesus Christ, Superstar*. In '71, he, Jones and Brown considered an offer from Gary Wright to join a reformed Spooky Tooth, but ultimately only Jones made the trip to England (eventually to find fame with Foreigner). After *Superstar* ended, Ronnie took off on a voyage of self-discovery, eventually settling in the US and forging a new career in television.

In his absence, a cult grew up around his recordings, with a '77 revival of 'Où va-t-elle' by Bijou and, in the '80s, a series of features in collectors' magazine *Jukebox*, edited by überfan Jacques Leblanc. On a visit to France, he added lyrics to a tune by Pierre Papadiamandis, the resulting 'Precious Thing' becoming a European hit for Ray Charles & Dee Dee Bridgewater. All this interest eventually resulted in '92's *One World* CD, but the world music-themes bore little resemblance to his classic work. Thereafter, Ronnie retreated into the safety of his Maryland home, breaking cover only to issue the low-key collection *The Demos* in 2016 and to participate on the 2017 album *Nebula* by Himiko (two refugees from Magma).

For all his cult appeal, Ronnie never did become a big star, but then, he never wanted to make the compromises needed to achieve that goal. Too cool and stylish to fit the "all friends together" *yé-yé* world, his mod outlook made him a natural cult hero, and despite a string of first-class records, that's what he remained. While he did his fair share of promotional duties – television appearances, magazine covers, fashion shoots for *Salut Les Copains* – you can't quite imagine him donning a tux and schmoozing with Charles Aznavour or Sacha Distel, but, well, that was a large part of his appeal. He was what he was, for better or for worse, and it's that authenticity, coupled with his peerless recording legacy, that means that his legends endures to this day. S!

Quotes from interviews for the French collectors' magazine Jukebox*, for Josh Styles' article in* Ugly Things *(2005) and for Christian Eudeline's 2006 book,* Anti-Yé-Yé. *Photographs by Jean-Louis Rancurel from the collection of Marc Liozon at Club des Années 60. Press cuttings from* Salut Les Copains *and* Disco Revue *from ronniebird.toochattoo.com and the author's collection. Additional images from Robert Poli. Gareth Jones' book* French Pop: From Music Hall To Yé-Yé *is available from Music Mentor Books*



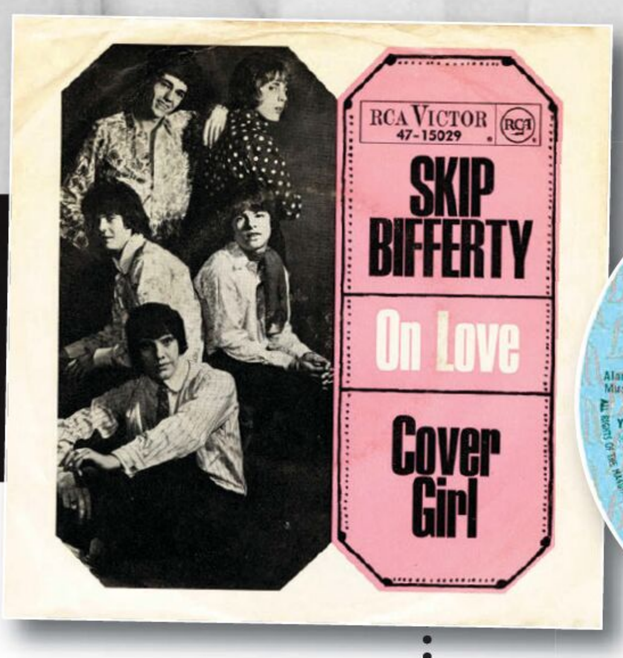
"Bell was known to be a bit of a handful, so it was only a matter of time before somebody decked him." Graham Bell during reharsals for the stage performance of *Tommy*, 1972

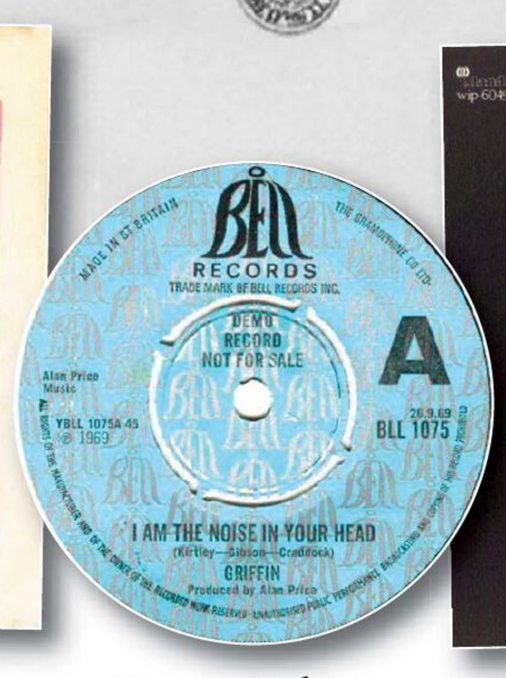
FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

WITH HIS POWERHOUSE VOCALS, FEARLESS DEMEANOUR AND QUICK TEMPER, **GRAHAM BELL** WASN'T ALWAYS THE EASIEST MAN TO BE AROUND. CONSEQUENTLY, SKIP BIFFERTY, GRIFFIN AND BELL + ARC ALL FELL BY THE WAYSIDE, YET WHENEVER HE STEPPED UP TO SING THE BLUES THERE WERE FEW WHO COULD MATCH HIM.

CHRIS GROOM PIECES TOGETHER THE STORY OF NORTHUMBERLAND'S NEARLY MAN

"Each time I play I'm pleading, I'm screaming to that audience that for God's sake I'm giving them all my soul, giving them all my hang-ups. I'm expressing for them, getting it all out there for them. I don't know why it's me up there, but it is." Unburdening himself to *Melody Maker*'s Roy Hollingworth in August 1971, Graham Bell's intensity, burning ambition and a surprising insecurity came bubbling to the surface. And this was Bell on a good day…





Bell (middle) in Skip Bifferty with Mickey Gallagher, Tommy Jackman, Johnny Turnbull and Colin Gibson, 1968; Skip, Griffin and Heavy Jelly 45s

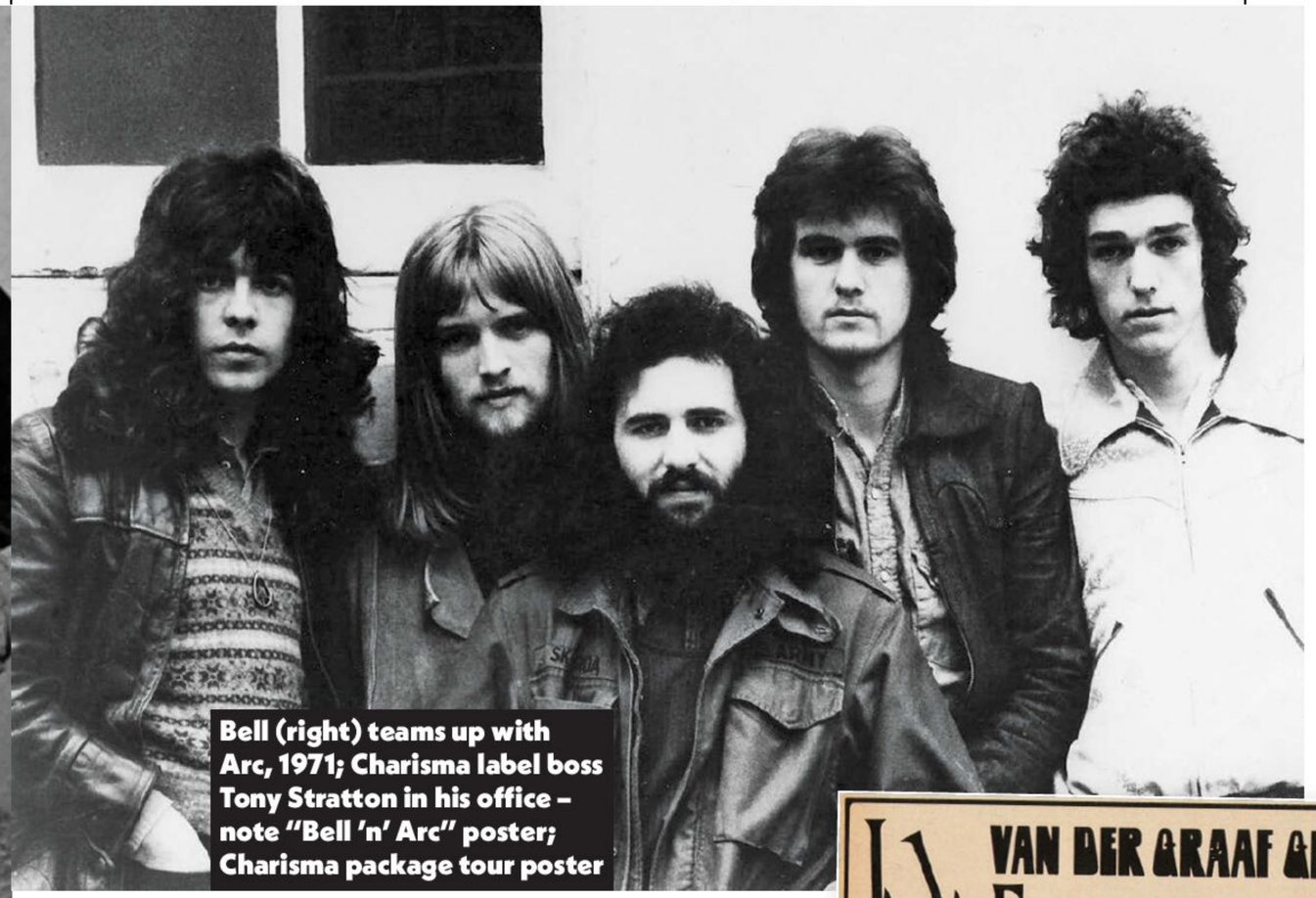
As the final days of 1968 drew to a close, the promising career of Newcastle group Skip Bifferty was slowly being squeezed out of existence by the vindictive and occasionally violent methods of manager Don Arden. Frustrated at being unable to work or record, lead singer Graham Bell telephoned Arden to say the band wanted to leave. "Of course, Don wasn't having it," recalls Skip keyboard player Mick Gallagher, "and then we got hit by this huge bill. We thought he'd been covering rent and groceries, but it was all on tick – turns out he hadn't been paying for anything. His sage advice to us was to do a runner, which we did, but more to get away from Don than paying the bill!"

Despite informing the music press that Bifferty was no more, the band actually used it as a distraction to set up their own deal with Island Records. Bell, Gallagher, guitarist Johnny Turnbull and bassist Colin Gibson touted themselves around London and Chris Blackwell took the bait, setting up a session with producer Guy Stevens at the label's Notting Hill studio. The only personnel change was to bring in drummer Paul Nichols to replace the departing Tommy Jackman.

Having known the band since their early Quay Club days, Nichols arrived during the last litigious knockings of the group and just in time to witness Bell fending off Arden's bully boys. "Graham was fearless, he wasn't scared of anyone," laughs Nichols. "One night we went down to the nearest phone box to call a rival record company, when this big black car pulls up and these heavies get out. They say, 'If you try and leave Mr Arden, it's not going to be easy for you.' Our Graham starts walking towards them waving his arms around – and I'm behind him thinking, 'What have I got myself into now?' – and Graham's screaming, 'What ye fucking gonna do, like?' He totally fronted them out, you know? Just brilliant."

For the Island session, the band chose Colin Gibson's 'I Keep Singing That Same Old Song', extended to a whopping 7:49 by the enthusiastic Stevens. "The track was basically six or seven minutes of jamming, with Graham pouring his heart out," recalled Gallagher, "and Island were very happy until Don Arden came down heavy and jinxed it." Rush-released in January '69, and using the name Heavy Jelly for obvious reasons, the single looked to be doing well, particularly in Europe. However, as Arden wouldn't let Bell and the boys tour, Island needed another band to promote it, putting together an alternative Heavy Jelly fronted by Jackie Lomax and sending them off to tour Scandinavia.

Meanwhile, Bell and his dispirited bandmates disappeared to a little cottage near the beach on The Isle Of Wight and went feral for a few months. "We naively thought we could still work for Island, they'd send a van and a roadie down and we'd carry on getting gigs," says Gallagher, "but with Arden trying to sue them, the whole deal just collapsed. Graham got involved with a guitarist and went folky, all very Bob Dylan-ish, in his efforts to keep working. We all trooped back to Newcastle, one by one." According to Colin Gibson, it was Bell's father Jimmy who drove all the way down to ferry them back home, "before we all starved to death".



Bell (right) teams up with Arc, 1971; Charisma label boss Tony Stratton in his office – note "Bell 'n' Arc" poster; Charisma package tour poster

Graham Thomas Bell had grown up in Blyth, a coastal town that once boasted one of the largest shipyards in the north-east. However, by the early '60s the town was in decline and any chance of working in the dockyard or the mining industry was fading fast. Rock 'n' roll, on the other hand, offered a way out. Bell already hailed from a performing family, his grandmother Mary had been a dance mistress while his mother, Amy Leonora Rogers was an aspiring actress before she married. Bell's father James, later a Labour councillor, could also hold a tune after a pint or two. Initially drawn to the burgeoning Newcastle rhythm and blues scene, the keen young singer aimed straight for the gold-paved streets of London, where, by '66 he was fronting The Graham Bell Trend, gigging at Tiles and opening a package tour for Jerry Lee Lewis. Spotted by Polydor, Bell cut the Al Kooper/Irwin Levine song '(How Do You Say) I Don't Love You Anymore', previously recorded by Freda Payne. Still finding his real voice, the 18-year-old contrived to sound like a young Scott Walker battling against a soulful brass section.

Determination and self-confidence were never in short supply where Graham Bell was concerned. Asked by *Melody Maker* journo Chris Welch about his quest for success, the singer made no bones about what he wanted out of the business. "It's got to happen for us, we're desperate for a hit," wailed Bell. "I want to make lots of money and never have to work again, outside of the pop business. Everybody tries to be so cool today and that's stupid. We love screamers and the ripping of shirts. It's a drag to be ordinary."

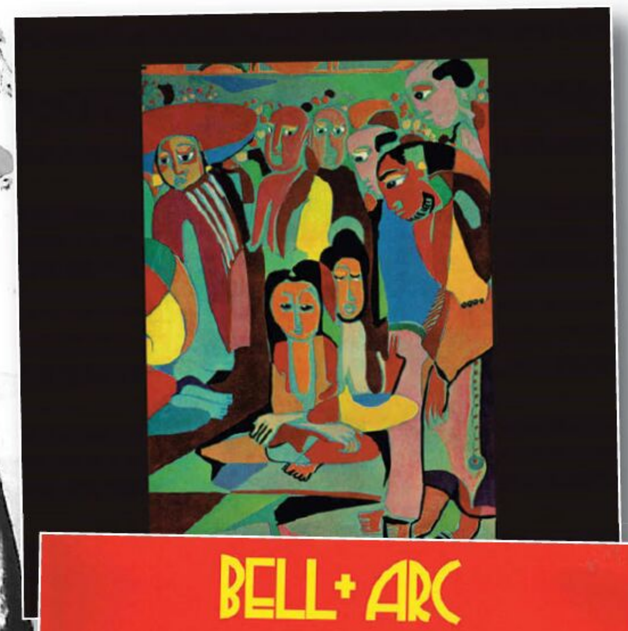
After his "close but no cigar" magic carpet ride with Skip Bifferty, Bell wasn't about to quit anytime soon. Dipping into the clique of north-east musicians already living down south, Bell and Gibson next hooked up with Happy Magazine's keyboard maestro Kenny Craddock, guitarist Pete Kirtley and drummer Alan White to become Griffin, playing sell-out gigs at The Marquee, recording a radio session for *Top Gear* and making one single, appropriately enough, for Bell

> "THIS BIG BLACK CAR PULLS UP AND THESE HEAVIES GET OUT. THEY SAY, 'IF YOU TRY AND LEAVE MR ARDEN, IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY FOR YOU.' OUR GRAHAM STARTS WALKING TOWARDS THEM WAVING HIS ARMS AROUND – AND SCREAMING, 'WHAT YE FUCKING GONNA DO, LIKE?'" **PAUL NICHOLS**

Records. 'I Am The Noise In Your Head' was a heavy slice of psych-rock written by Kirtley, Gibson and Craddock, and produced by Alan Price in September '69. Barely out of the pressing plant, it was spitefully scuppered by… guess who. This aspect of the business was not exactly what these musicians had signed up for. Craddock recalled Don Arden physically threatening one of the record company executives, while Bell later admitted, "It freaked me out. It was with Griffin that I finally grew up." Bloodied but unbowed, Graham Bell doggedly remained in London.

Following the break-up of The Nice, drummer Brian Davison was about to take a well-earned break when he literally bumped into Bell and Geoffrey Peach wandering around Soho. Talking to *Beat Instrumental*, Davison admitted he hadn't been looking for a new group, "But I found myself saying, 'Now Graham's got a good voice and Geoff's a good tenor player. My roadie suggested Alan Cartwright as a bass player. Next thing I knew, I'd dropped the holiday!'" Several auditions later, Davison happily settled on guitarist John Hedley from The John Lewis Blues Band in Morpeth. "The first rehearsal was a real eye-opener and a sign of things to come," said Hedley. "We spent the day in a photographic studio on Tottenham Court Road and got through a case of red wine laced with mescaline. Everything was lubricated by drugs."

Signed to The Famous Charisma Label, Brian Davison's Every Which Way made their recording debut in September '70 with the single 'Go Placidly' from their moodily atmospheric first album. Produced by Davison, most of the songs were written by a tripping Bell including the melancholic 'Castle Sand', a hybrid of folk and progressive rock with Geoff Peach's jazzy reeds pushing the sound closer to Traffic than anything The Nice ever recorded. Delighted with the recording, Davison had only good things to say about his new vocalist, telling *Beat Instrumental*, "He's really the best guy I could have found; great voice, great presence, great songwriter – the lot." Yet despite talk of another album, everything was about to implode. "Everything started well enough, but things weren't right with Graham," said John Hedley. "Brian sacked him just before Christmas. There were a few issues, not least a co-writing credit to a B Niforos which Graham really wasn't happy about. We didn't know who this was, but Brian did have a Greek girlfriend at the time. After Graham went, they decided to add keyboard player Mike Storey, so the band suddenly changed into a jazz-fusion thing doing stuff by John Coltrane and Freddie Hubbard. Eventually, Tony Stratton Smith simply ripped up the management contract and Brian said that he would manage the band. Well, that lasted about two months and Brian finally threw in the towel. Overall, a sad waste of talent, time, dreams and



Bell + Arc before Bell "fired the rest of the band"; Brian Davison's Every Which Way and Bll + Arc's self-titled 1970 and '71 albums; Bell + Arc on stage

money – but definitely big on experience…"

Leaving Every Which Way under a dark cloud, Bell decided to reconnect with Turnbull and Gallagher. Now working for publishing company Robbins Music, they had recruited bassist Tommy Duffy and drummer Rob Tait and were calling themselves Arc. "Next time I met Graham, he'd been to America and was hanging out with a couple of New York harridans," smiles Gallagher. "He was very influenced by the American scene and started to get a bit shouty, so rather than use his real voice he went a bit Janis Joplin, which wasn't great, but he thought that's the way he needed to go."

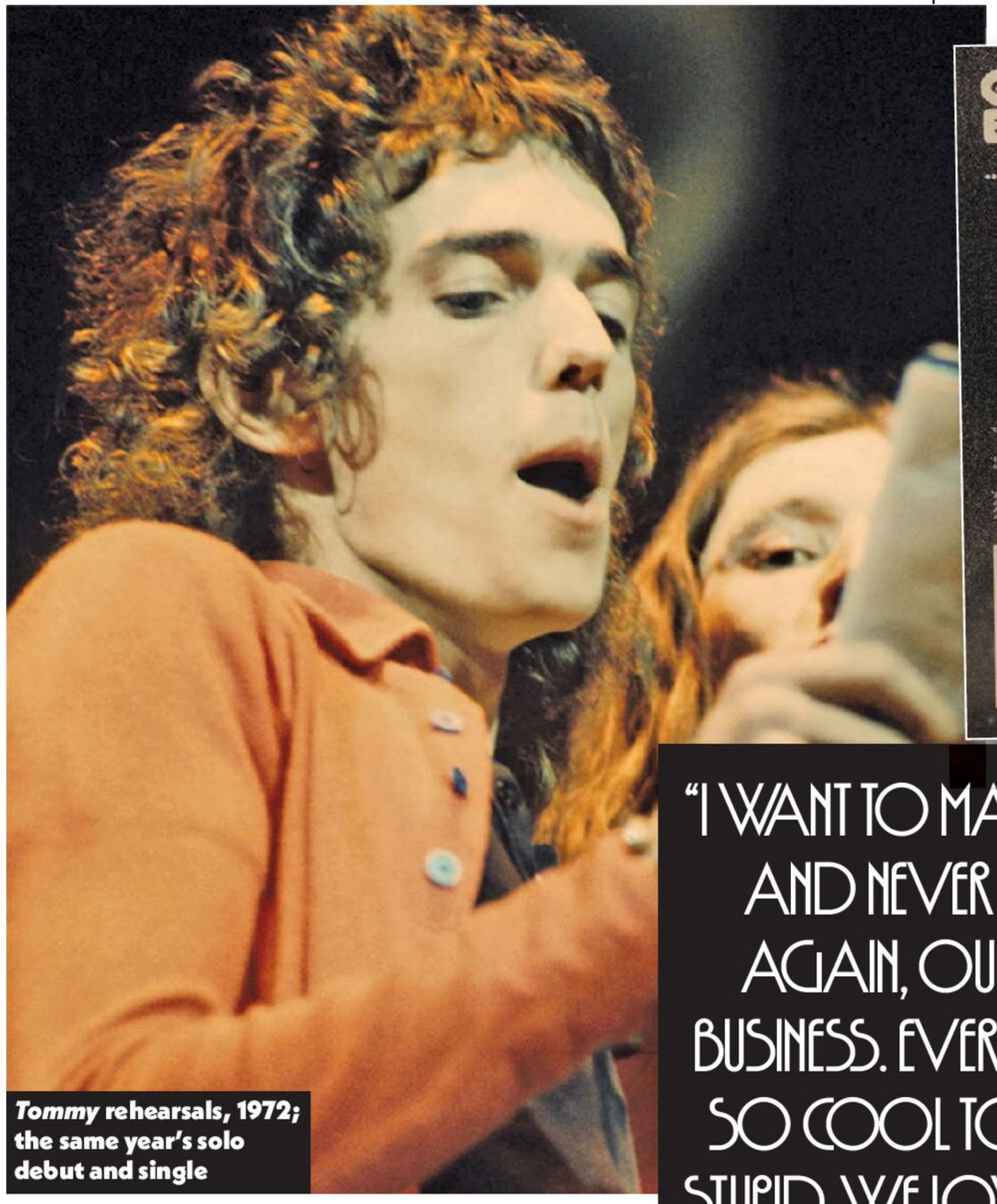
When Bell asked Gallagher and Turnbull to play on tracks for a proposed solo album, the studio sessions worked so well that they decided to amalgamate their talents. Bell + Arc quickly became Charisma's blue-eyed boys and '71 was the year they almost broke big, blowing The James Gang offstage at The Lyceum, receiving a rapturous Roundhouse reception and turning in a magnificent performance at Reading Festival that reduced label boss Tony Stratton Smith to tears and had *Melody Maker* raving about the lead singer. "Bell has finally found a situation to suit the war-bag full of talent that screws itself out in anguished, raging songs of such mood that you think the guy's going to expire there and then."

Stratton Smith employed American producer Bob Johnston to sprinkle his magic on Bell + Arc's debut, a move that had worked well for his other Geordie protégés Lindisfarne. Introducing the band, Strat said, almost apologetically, "Don't be misled by their youthfulness." Johnston took one close look at the group and replied, "Hell, man, their eyes are 10,000 years old!"

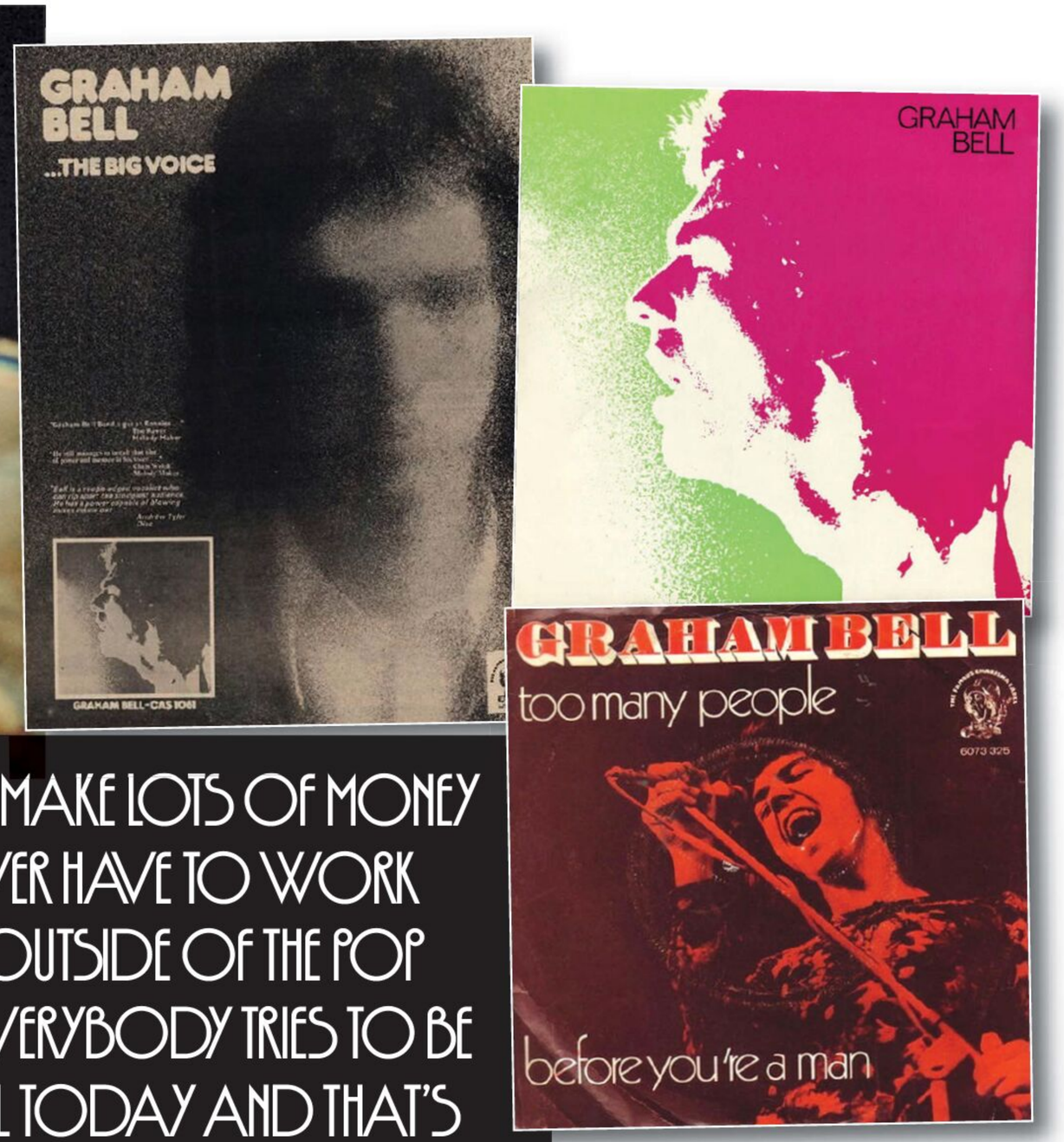
Writing and rehearsing at Symonds Yat, tucked away in The Forest Of Dean, the band moved to Island Studios in Basing Street, London for the final recordings, naming one track 'Yat Rock' in tribute to their rural retreat. Charisma treated the press to their usual tactic, a long, boozy lunch at which Bob Johnston was present, before retiring to a nearby playback studio for an album preview. *Disc's* four-star review proclaimed Bell + Arc "…one of the more interesting new outfits around, musicians who are creatively confident and eager to expound and expand." With high-octane tracks like Bell's 'High Priest Of Memphis' and a dramatic reading of Leonard Cohen's 'So Long Marianne', it's a vastly under-rated album, but Mick Gallagher has a view on the records' failings. "It's certainly different," he argues, "but we were trying to be very English, while Graham was trying his best to sound American. That was the problem, in essence. He was abusing his voice, which was a shame because I had always loved his real voice."

Album sales paled in comparison to the band's storming live performances, notably on a gruelling 19-date tour of America with The Who in November and December, with drummer Alan White replacing Rob Tait. Back on home soil, however, Graham Bell promptly fired the rest of the band without bothering to tell Stratton Smith, much to the annoyance of the genial manager who had helped bring Bell + Arc together in the first place. "We really enjoyed America," said Gallagher, "but Graham was only there for himself, not the band. He was hob-nobbing with Bob Johnston and his friends, who were part of a very heavy and strange Nashville scene. He wanted to ingratiate himself with them, whereas we all stood back and that created an imbalance in the band. From that point on Graham saw himself as a solo artist. We came back to England and I got the sack. Graham briefly went off with John Turnbull but even that ended badly, with fist fights and all sorts of problems."

Graham Bell's reputation as a "difficult artiste" is borne out by this story from art director Frank Sansom. Barely three weeks into a new job with B&C Records, Sansom heard someone berating a young staff member in the post room below the offices in Soho Square. Remonstrating with the angry dark-haired stranger, Sansom suddenly became the object of the abuse. "I walked away, but the guy spun me around and put his face right into mine," said Sansom. "I knew what was coming, so before he could do anything, I hit him and left him in a heap on the



Tommy rehearsals, 1972; the same year's solo debut and single



floor. There were raised eyebrows from the gathering crowd, even the boy looked shocked, saying, "Do you know who that is? That's Graham Bell."

Thinking his career was over, Sansom went straight to tender his resignation, but the amiable Stratton Smith refused, taking the worried art director to a nearby pub to settle his nerves over a drink. "Strat completely diffused the situation," smiled Sansom, "but Bell was known to be a bit of a handful, so it was only a matter of time before somebody decked him."

Clearly, tying down the ambitious singer to a band wasn't working, so making his own album seemed the obvious next move. Graham Bell's eponymous solo debut for Charisma started life in Island Studios before producer Bob Johnston took Bell back with him to Nashville to complete the recordings. Griffin's Kenny Craddock began work on the UK sessions but missed the cut for the final recording, losing out to American keyboard player Bob Wilson, with whom Bell had struck up a useful songwriting partnership. Containing some of Bell's best work, like the brass-infused 'Before You Can Be A Man', and 'Too Many People', the record rightly picked up plaudits from the music papers. "Bell is a rough-edged vocalist who can rip apart the stodgiest audience. He has a power capable of ripping mics inside out…" enthused Andrew Tyler from *Disc*, while long-time acolyte Chris Welch raved about the "hint of power and menace in his voice".

That same vocal prowess had been closely monitored by Pete Townshend when Bell + Arc opened for The Who, effectively an audition that saw Bell installed as a key member of the all-star cast assembled for the '72 London Symphony Orchestra production of

"I WANT TO MAKE LOTS OF MONEY AND NEVER HAVE TO WORK AGAIN, OUTSIDE OF THE POP BUSINESS. EVERYBODY TRIES TO BE SO COOL TODAY AND THAT'S STUPID. WE LOVE SCREAMERS AND THE RIPPING OF SHIRTS. IT'S A DRAG TO BE ORDINARY" GRAHAM BELL

Tommy. Bell already had a reputation as a womaniser and, in a case of art imitating life, played the part of The Lover, who canoodles with Mrs Walker (Maggie Bell) before her army husband (Steve Winwood) returns home and kills him in front of little Tommy, triggering the boy's "deaf, dumb and blind" state. On the album, Graham Bell handles '1921' with consummate ease. To promote Lou Reizner's studio recording, the full ensemble performed two live shows at London's Rainbow Theatre in December '72, but when another pair were arranged the following December, only Bell, Daltrey, Richie Havens and Merry Clayton kept their places. When *Tommy* played a short Australian tour in '73, Keith Moon and Graham Bell were the sole survivors of the British cast to appear, with Bell now playing The Narrator.

Following his dedicated work on *Tommy*, a proposed Pete Townshend-produced solo album for Bell failed to materialise. Instead, Bell spent some downtime relaxing in Jamaica, due in part to his connection with Island's Chris Blackwell and a brief relationship with Anna Capaldi-Gilbey. "The rumour was that Graham had stayed with Bob Marley," states Paul Nichols, "and it wouldn't surprise me, because he had such a gob on him he could talk his way into anywhere."

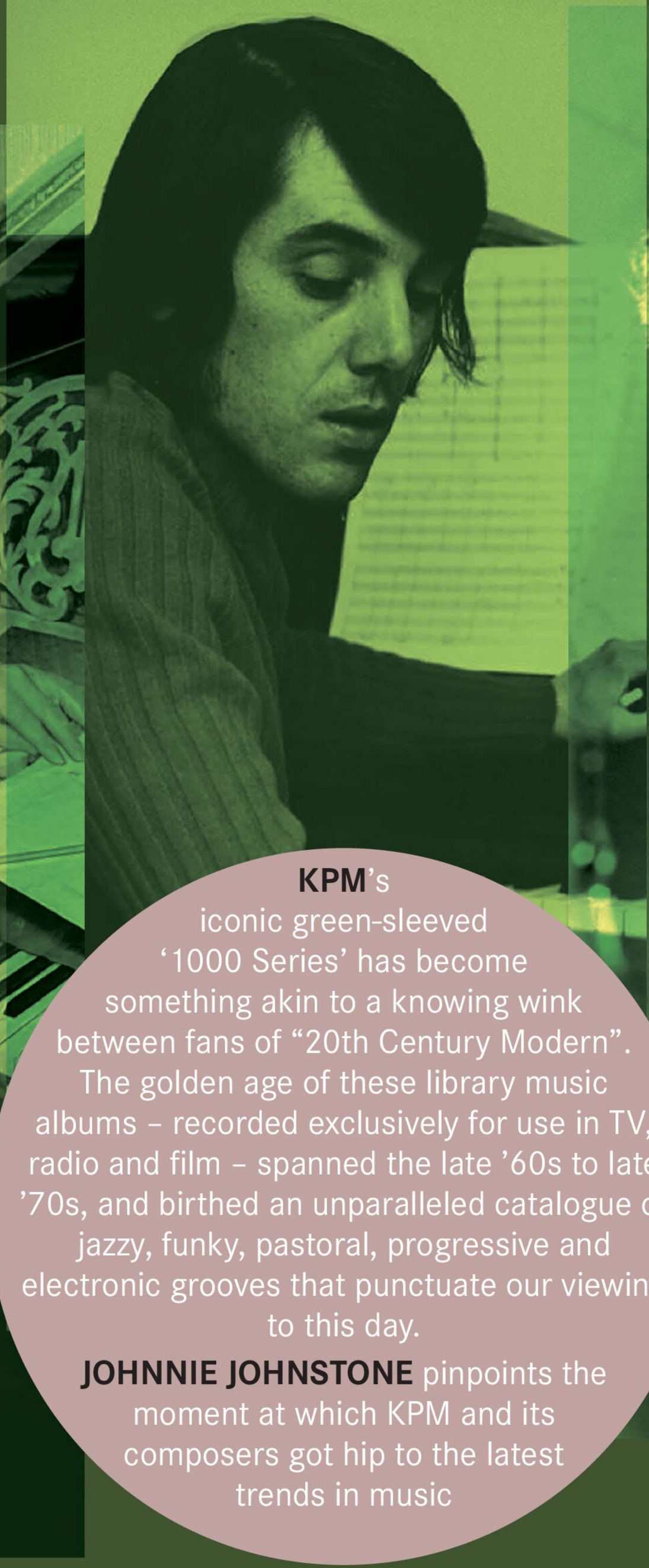
Despite being "Picked to Click in '76" in a *Sounds* writers' poll, Bell's next move was to Los Angeles, where he sang with The Tea Bags, a fluid line-up of ex-pat Brits that included Jackie Lomax, Ian Wallace, Terry Reid, Kim Gardner and Brian Auger amongst others. Either by accident or design, Bell managed to avoid the UK punk scene where, ironically, two of his former bandmates were riding high on the new musical wave. John Turnbull and Micky Gallagher were now key members of The Blockheads and Gallagher recalls the one and only meeting between his two "crazy and difficult" frontmen. "When we first went to America with Ian in '78, we were in LA and Graham got in touch. I said, 'Come over and say hello'. Ian was in my hotel room when Graham knocked on the door, I introduced Ian to him and they both immediately recoiled from each other. Wow! It was phenomenal, like those opposite poles that repel rather than attract, you know. Before they even spoke, you knew it wasn't going to end well!"

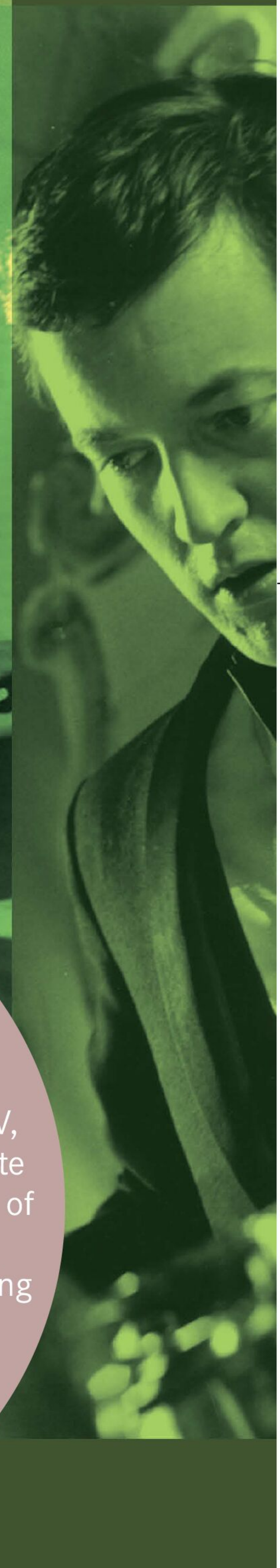
Graham Bell never quite recaptured the glory days of Arc and Bifferty, reappearing sporadically with various blues bands until tragically, for the man with the golden larynx, he developed throat cancer. He was found dead at his London home in May 2008, barely two weeks after his 60th birthday. As he once told Roy Hollingworth, "I know damned well that it wouldn't be worth me being alive, if I couldn't play music."

Music undoubtedly lifted him higher, but whether due to the constant need to change horses or the sheer bloody-mindedness that success must be on his terms, Bell never quite made the impact and reaped the rewards that his visionary songwriting and soaring voice deserved. Listening back now to some of the soulful, sweat-soaked tracks he left behind, that is a crying shame. S!

Thanks to Micky Gallagher, Paul Nichols, John Hedley and Frank Sansom for sharing

Perpetu





KPM's iconic green-sleeved '1000 Series' has become something akin to a knowing wink between fans of "20th Century Modern". The golden age of these library music albums – recorded exclusively for use in TV, radio and film – spanned the late '60s to late '70s, and birthed an unparalleled catalogue of jazzy, funky, pastoral, progressive and electronic grooves that punctuate our viewing to this day.

JOHNNIE JOHNSTONE pinpoints the moment at which KPM and its composers got hip to the latest trends in music

al Motion

The KPM gods in their late '60s/early '70s prime. L-R: Johnny Pearson, Keith Mansfield, Brian Bennett, John Cameron, Alan Hawkshaw

The dynamic staccato strings and high energy brass fanfare are instantly recognisable. You'll remember it as the title tune for the '70s UK TV show *Superstars* (or, if you live on the other side of the Atlantic, the long-running theme from *Monday Night Football*). It's called 'Heavy Action'. The chances are you might not have known that, nor might you know its composer. The same thing could be said for 'Studio 69', a twinkling R&B organ groove used for the opening credits of *The Dave Allen Show*, or even the memorably sinister theme from *Mastermind*, 'Approaching Menace'.

Most of us grew up with these tunes indelibly lodged in our consciousness. They soundtracked our childhood and continue to evoke a vivid nostalgia for Tretchikoff Blue Lady art prints, artexed walls, *Generation Game* cocktail makers and educational television programmes wheeled out on the school trolley. At the time, few would have had a clue who wrote or performed them, but they were everywhere, hundreds of them – with innocuous titles like 'Sky Train', 'Country Lanes', 'Safe Landings' and 'Life Of Leisure'. Some were commissioned specifically by producers of television programmes, but the vast majority were drawn from a seemingly endless stock of what popularly became known as library music.

There were a few companies that specialised in the production of library music, usually released on 10-inch 78rpm vinyl, such as De Wolfe and JW Theme Music (later Josef Weinberger Ltd), but by far the most important was KPM. KPM had its roots in a 19th century partnership between two makers of musical instruments, Robert William Keith and William Prowse. Nearly a century later, Patrick Howgill at KP Music recognised a potential gap in the market with the launch in 1955 of independent television. One of the first ITV companies was Rediffusion, who soon bought out Peter Maurice Music, and in '56 a new company, KPM (Keith Prowse Maurice) was born. Around that time, Jimmy Phillips came on board. Phillips had been a successful publisher and lyricist, even boasting a credit (under his pseudonym John Turner) for Charlie Chaplin's '54 song 'Smile', which borrowed the instrumental theme from his '36 masterpiece *Modern Times*.

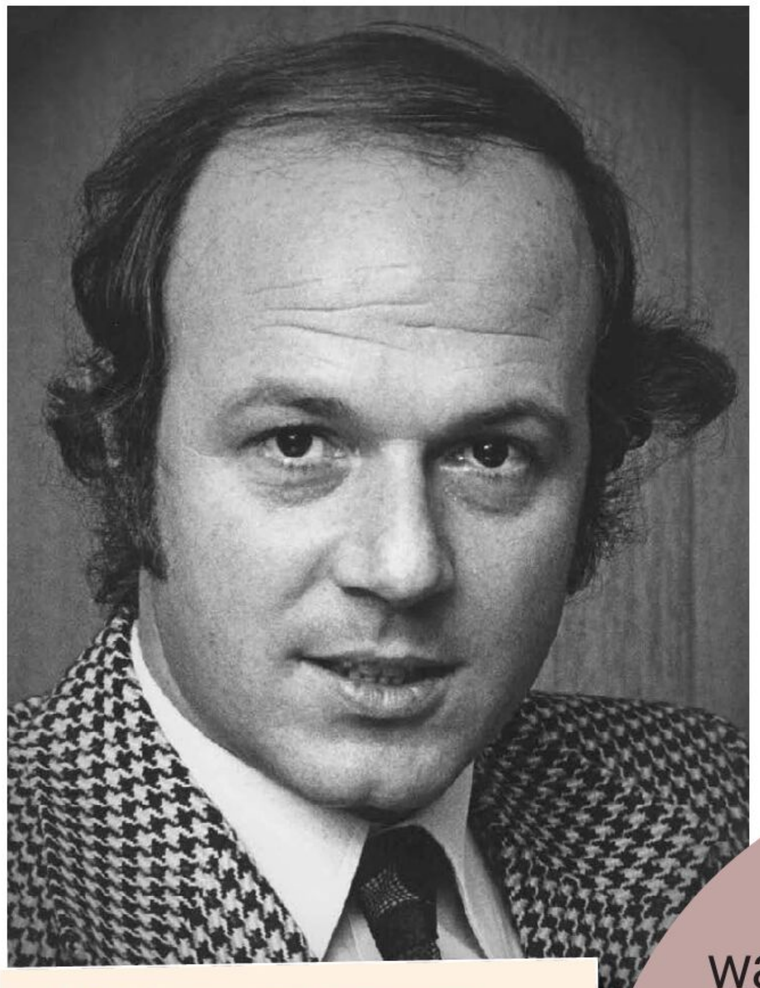
Phillips oversaw the development of the KPM music library of the late '50s and early '60s, working with some familiar names (Ted Heath, Trevor Duncan, Kenny Graham) as well as a few surprising ones, including Maurice Jarre and Sacha Distel. There's even a Jacques Brel instrumental from the time, entitled 'Les Crocodiles'. KPM quickly established itself as the "go-to" music company of the time. And they were in high demand. In the post-war boom, the golden age for television and advertising had arrived and the need for suitable material was insatiable.

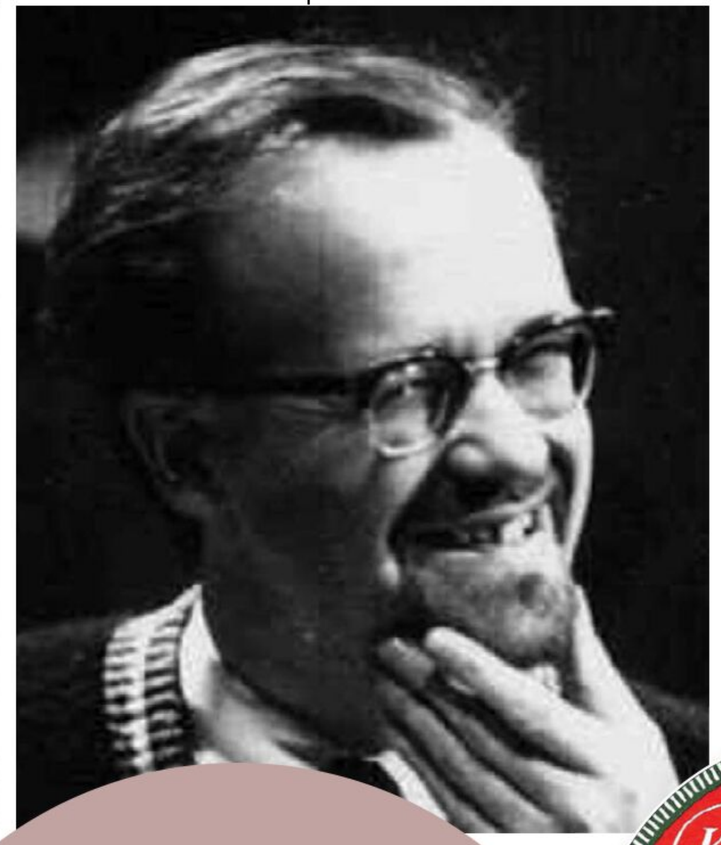
The records produced at KPM weren't on sale to the general public. Instead, they were subscription-only albums sent out globally to television companies and film producers. They were particularly valued by the industry as it meant broadcasters did not need to commission – at far greater expense – composers, arrangers and orchestras to specially write and record the music. But that created complications. For much of the '60s and '70s, recording library music in England was frowned upon by The Musicians' Union, since they thought it endangered the livelihoods of those employed as part of live studio orchestras. In response, KPM stalwarts often travelled to Germany or Belgium for their recording sessions. It also meant that often the composers and session musicians responsible for producing music for TV Shows and adverts, were looked down upon as corporate stooges or session players pissing their talent up against a wall.

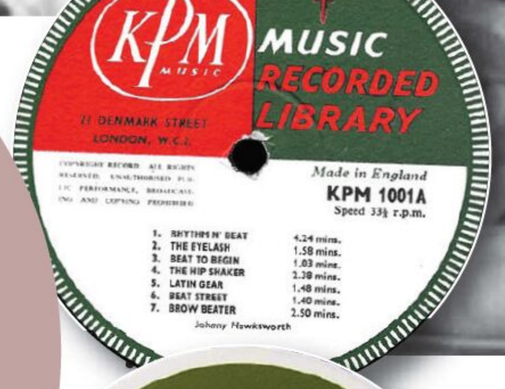
But that was about to change. The chief instigator was Jimmy Phillips' son Robin. Fashions come and go, but the pace of change in popular music was unrelenting, meaning if artists and labels weren't prepared to move with the times, there was a genuine risk they'd be left on the scrapheap. Under Robin Phillips' tutelage, the label began to radically change direction. He steered the company back on track by firstly identifying musicians who had far greater inside knowledge of pop's rapidly changing climate. One of his first projects was the development in '66 of what is now known as the KPM 1000 Series, whose distinctive functional green sleeves housed "music specifically recorded for film, radio & television". From the basement studio beneath the KPM offices on Denmark Street, the albums were knocked out at a furious pace. The first release (KPM-1001) was entitled *The Mood Modern,* later the title of an impressive book on the subject, written by Oliver Lomax. If fans browsing in Woolworths and HMV on Oxford Street on a Saturday afternoon were oblivious to their existence; those responsible for programming at BBC and ITV, and even some contemporary film-makers, were eager to license them.

Some of the most prolific players during this hugely successful period of library music were Brian Bennett, Alan Hawkshaw, Johnny Pearson, Syd Dale, Ron Geesin, David Lindup, John Cameron and Keith Mansfield. Mansfield is undoubtedly one of the central figures in the KPM revival, famously penning the theme for *Grandstand* one morning while stuck at traffic lights on his way to work. Sports broadcasters seemed to love him, and he also provided ITV with 'The Young Scene', the original theme for *The Big Match* (complete with cooking Hammond and wah-wah fuzz), 'World Series' the brass-sharp intro to the BBC's *Athletics* programmes and the triumphant 'Light & Tuneful', used since '76 as theme to their coverage of the *Wimbledon* tennis championships. Mansfield's contribution is important, reflecting the label's increasing versatility. His late '60s and early '70s output was prolific. What was particularly impressive was how he managed to accommodate contemporary pop sounds into his own creations. Take the classic '69 track from his *Beat Incidental* LP, 'Funky Fanfare', a mid-tempo piece with terrific brass playing, and a boogie-woogie piano middle, which – along the way – manages to pinch the bassline from 'Je T'Aime'. The same year's *Chorus & Orchestra* produced the fantastic flute-driven 'Morning Broadway' with its delicious whistling melody. Then there was 'West Coast USA' from '71. The title says it all. It could fit quite comfortably onto any classic rock album from the time. It's hard to believe it's not Nicky Hopkins on the keys, and the whole thing is overlaid with super-chunks of fuzz. Contrast those tracks with 77's 'Perpetual Motion' (a hypnotic blend of analogue synths, vibes and strings) and one gains a sense of how diverse Mansfield's output was. Many were taking notes and Mansfield's music has been heavily sampled by Fatboy Slim, Dangermouse, Gnarls Barkley, Denzel Curry and many others, illustrating how far KPM had come from being almost a laughing stock amongst serious music fans, to enjoying the status of ultra-hip imprint.

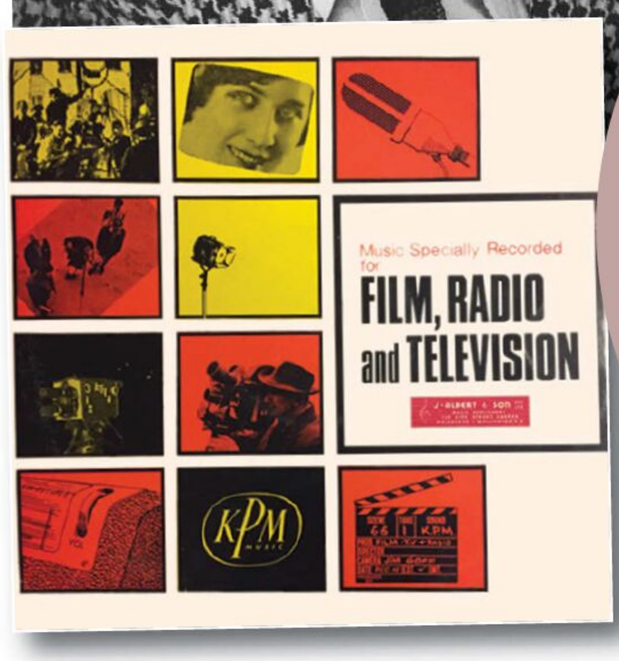
The transition from the KPM of '65 through to the mid-70s was indeed remarkable. On the one hand, Robin Phillps knew the company had to remain faithful to the light-jazz, easy-listening and semi-classical sounds upon which it and broadcasters and advertising agencies had traditionally relied, but he







Robin Phillips steered KPM through its glory years; composers David Lindup and Syd Dale, "something of a genius"; the original pre-green 1966/67 KPM sleeve; early trend-setters



> "Robin Phillips was prepared to take risks. He would give you a brief: **Heavy rock. Funky rock. Wildlife. Drama.** I just went with my instinct"
>
> **Alan Hawkshaw**

was equally determined that it could compete with the modern set. Ultimately his success in doing so was unsurprising, for the talent at the label was phenomenal. Someone like Johnny Pearson, who would go on to compose 'Heavy Action', the stirring theme from *Superstars* in '74, already had an impressive CV, penning an orchestral arrangement for Cilla Black's take of the Bacharach & David classic 'Anyone Who Had A Heart' at George Martin's request in '64. It topped the charts. Two years later, Pearson was appointed director of the resident orchestra for *Top Of The Pops*, remaining there for 15 years, and scoring a Top 10 hit along the way. 'Sleepy Shores' from '68, is a gloriously lush piece used for the '71 BBC series *Owen MD*. Like Mansfield, Pearson was prepared to vacillate between genres. In '69, he wrote an album's worth of jingles and short tunes for kids TV shows, including 'Mini Walking' the theme for *Mary Mungo & Midge*. Then, he could conjure something like 'Product Efficiency' from the fabulously titled '70 LP *Speed & Excitement*, demonstrating he could out-funk the R&B heavyweights. The lovely 'Autumn Reverie', a piece of library music hugely popular with advertisers, was reworked successfully by The Carpenters on their '73 album *Now & Then*. Pearson's success continued with famous television hits – themes for the long-running *All Creatures Great & Small*, the game show *3-2-1* and, most memorably, the lengthy and dramatic 'The Awakening', a short segment of which was used as the theme for ITV's *News At Ten*. But perhaps one of his greatest moments was the '76 LP *The Gemini Suite*, a contemporary classical release showcasing some amazing piano virtuosity. "It's also incredibly uncommercial, and I have no idea what Robin Phillips was thinking putting it out," suggests library music expert and soundtrack collector Simon Mclean. "I doubt they ever made their money back on it. One of the tracks was played on the BBC test card for a while, but I can't imagine anyone else using it for anything."

Syd Dale too, was a key figure in those early days. Known affectionately as 'Uncle Syd' to his stablemates, he is perhaps most famous for '69's wonderfully evocative 'Penthouse Suite'. If anything can quickly conjure an image of Pete Wyngarde in the conversation pit, it's 'Penthouse Suite'. "I regard Syd Dale as something of a genius," Mclean says. "He played a big part in getting KPM noticed in the early days of the 1000 Series. I love his tunes, which are incredibly catchy, and also his liking for unusual sounds – you'd get things like harpsichords, fuzz guitar, contrabass clarinets and vibraslaps, sometimes all in the same piece."

However, it was another composer who brought the label kicking and screaming into the post-psychedelic era with a series of contemporary sounding albums. Alan Hawkshaw could reproduce the latest modish sounds, venturing seamlessly into "rock" territory when the need arose. One of the first albums in the KPM series to truly reflect such changes was '67's *The Sound Of Pop* (KPM-1015), made by Hawkshaw with Bill Martin and Phil Coulter. A mixture of instrumentals and vocal pieces, it included 'The Raver', which mirrored the groovy sound of a Soho jazz club. Hawkshaw had started off playing the summer season on the Blackpool club circuit in the late '50s, but after Robin Phillips took over the reins at KPM, "he just let me loose in the studio," he told Strut Records in 2013. "He was prepared to take risks. He would give you a brief: Heavy rock. Funky rock. Wildlife. Drama. I just went with my instinct." Hawkshaw was thrilled to play a part in moving things forwards. "KPM had always been pretty strait-laced, but Robin was keen to hire younger more 'with it' arrangers such as Keith Mansfield and Duncan Lamont." One of Hawkshaw's early albums (made with Keith Mansfield) was '69's *The Big Beat*. It produced 'Studio 69' (*The Dave Allen Show*), as well as other groovy favourites such as 'Senior Thump' and 'Beat Me Til I'm Blue'.

Perhaps more than any of his stable-mates, Hawkshaw had a sense of what might work and how it could be used. And he wasn't afraid to pilfer from other songs either, such as the near shameless 'Knock On Wood' lift on 'Drive In' from '70's *Beat Industrial*. He could turn his hand to anything. Mystical Buddhist atmospherics on 'Stratosphere' ('71), the Blaxploitation-flavoured groove of 'Troubleshooter' ('72) or '77's 'Mystique Voyage', which could easily have passed as the theme tune for *Taxi* or *Soap*. Indeed, coming up with new TV themes was a particular area of expertise. He wrote the theme tune for *Grange Hill* ('Chicken Man') in typically spontaneous fashion in Munich in '75. Fearing he didn't have enough material for the session, he came up with it an hour before the recording session was due to begin. A Hawkshaw favourite of '70s retro-freaks will

Keith Mansfield conducts the orchestra for a KPM session

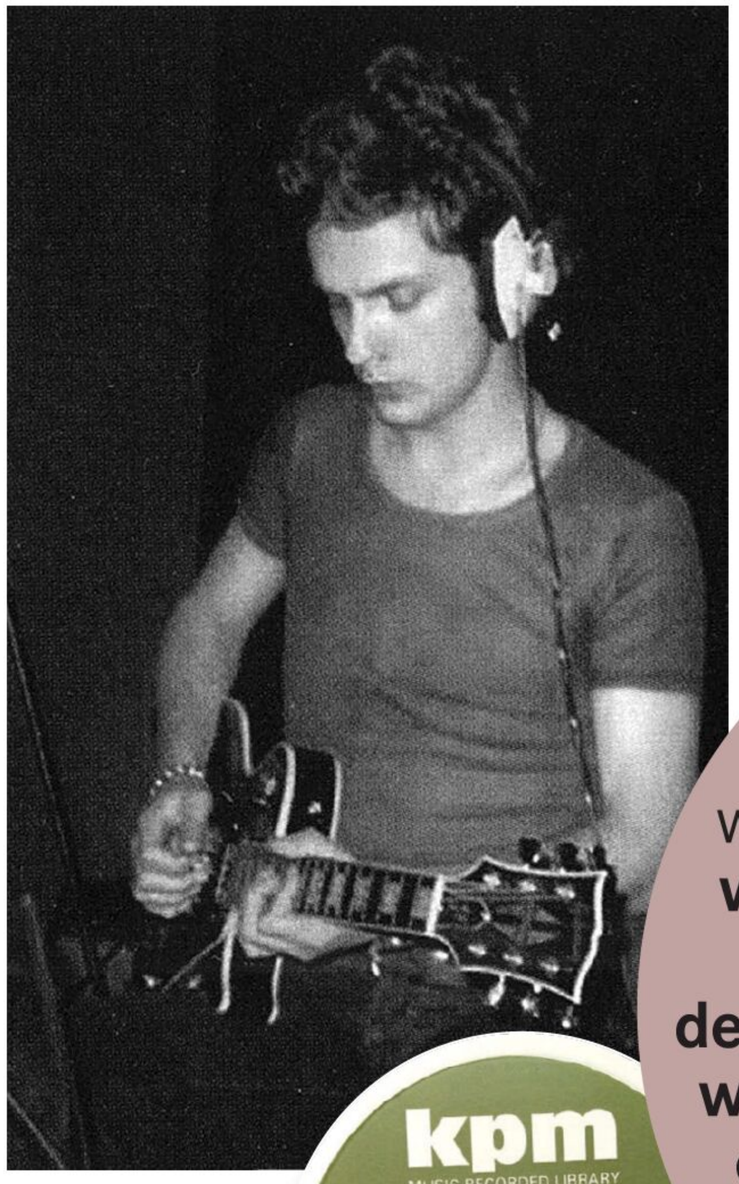
undoubtedly be 'Night Rider', the music that accompanied the black-clad stranger in Cadbury's Milk Tray adverts. Similar in mood was 'Mermaid', which is like watching your turntable melt into chocolate. Arguably even more memorable was the majestic easy roll of 'Girl in A Sportscar' from '73's *Friendly Faces*. Hawkshaw even worked with Giorgio Moroder and Donna Summer during the height of disco era. He was influential too. His '77 piece written for Hank Marvin ('New Earth Parts 1 & 2') was borrowed by Jay-Z 30 years later for his *American Gangster* album.

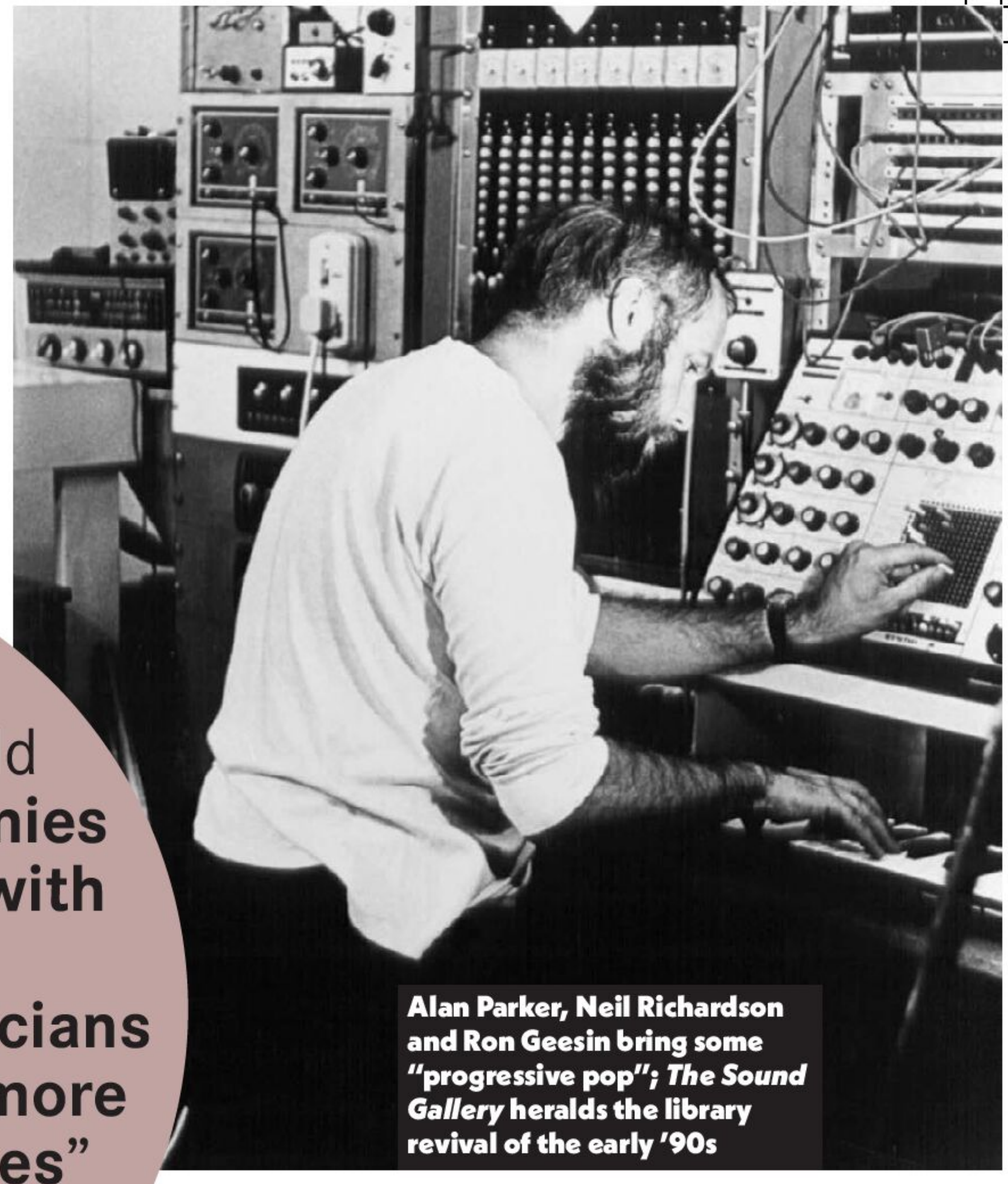
Even more inclined to "go heavy" was Alan Parker, one of the UK's most sought-after session players and part of KPM's very own 'Wrecking Crew' (Parker on guitar, Pete McGurk on bass, Kenny Clare on drums), a line-up that graced numerous recordings from the era. His 'Maximum Thrust' from '70's *Progressive Pop* did a splendid job of imitating Deep Purple, but he could mix it up like the rest of them. Years later, while being interviewed on American radio, Parker was stunned to discover 'You've Got What It Takes' from his '76 LP *The Voice Of Soul*, had been used in over a hundred porn films.

Other writers went further, partially because they were more tuned into the mainstream, but also because of a determination to break with convention. John Cameron was a veteran arranger and an accomplished writer of film soundtracks (from the pastoral atmospherics of '69's *Kes* to his early '70s writing for the horror film genre). His '72 LP *Jazz Rock* broke new ground for KPM, upping the ante with '49th Street Shakedown', which resembled Chicago playing the theme from *Hawaii Five-O,* with a little punky guitar trying to punch its way out of the groove. In the early '60s, Cameron had been dismissive of production music, preferring to psyche into free-jazz by Monk and Mingus instead, although from time to time he turned out a song or two for Jimmy Phillips. But by the end of the decade his view had changed completely. "Robin Phillips took the whole genre by the throat and made it more credible and relevant," he stated, "with people like Keith Mansfield. Suddenly, it wasn't just elevator muzak." Indeed, Cameron would go on to record several of KPM's most celebrated tracks, such as the spooky 'Go Getter' and the dreamily sensual pair 'Half Forgotten Daydreams' and 'Liquid Sunshine', both of which featured on '73's glorious *Voices In Harmony*, a collaboration with Keith Mansfield. Seductive, Isaac Hayes-inspired, they're virtually hymns to fondue-set suburban decadence and have been regularly sampled by contemporary hip-hop artists.

Then there was Brian Bennett. Bennett had form. Not only had he been The Shadows' drummer but had made solo jazz albums of his own. From '73 onwards Bennett was arguably the most popular and prolific artist at the label, seeing it through to the tail end of the decade. Like Alan Hawkshaw, Bennett wrote some familiar TV music ('Holy Mackerel' became the theme for the BBC's *Rugby Special*) and neither was he averse to pinching the odd idea – take the staccato piano of 'Glass Tubes', written after hearing Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* for the first time (40 years later, it was sampled on Drake's 'Summer Sixteen'). He turned out an extraordinary volume of fantastic material before he jumped ship to Bruton in '78. His *modus operandi* – as described in the sleeve notes to the wonderful retrospective of his work *Aim High: Brian Bennett At KPM 1973-1976*, was, like many other of the in-house producers, based on visualising a particular scene: "Think of an out-of-focus movement: lights, slow motion, night time" or "think of a misty morning". Some of the titles gave the game away: 'Traffic Patterns', with its repetitive geometric piano motif, or 'Grand Funk' which, like much of the mid-70s KPM output, bore the imprint of *Shaft*.

Often the source material would be American drama series or cop shows like *Ironside*, resulting in pieces like '75's 'Flying Squad'. Titles such as 'Quantum' (electronic, *avant-garde*) from '75's *Rock Spectrum* or the Moog magnificence of 'Ergon' (*Industry Vol 1*) tapped into his more experimental leanings. But perhaps most influential of all was his '74 track 'Image', the title-track from the collaborative album of the same name. It has everything – fluttering strings, butterfly flute and harp, louche wah-wah guitar. It's almost a blueprint for the post-trip-hop fantasias of Zero 7, Groove Armada and the like and could well be the quintessential KPM track, if one could





Alan Parker, Neil Richardson and Ron Geesin bring some "progressive pop"; *The Sound Gallery* heralds the library revival of the early '90s

> "Back then, musicians weren't told what to do. **Big companies weren't so obsessed with focus groups and demographics, so musicians were allowed to have more open-ended adventures"**
> **John Cavanagh**

ever imagine such a thing.

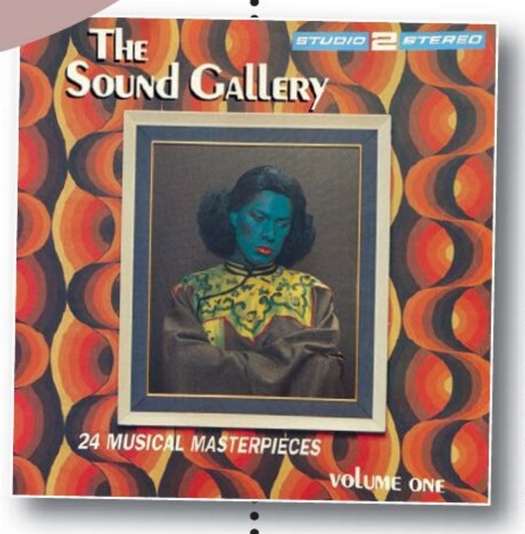
As KPM modernised, it was important too to make room for mavericks such as Ron Geesin. A jazz band veteran, Geesin had released a strange solo album in '67 (*A Raise Of Eyebrows*), before working alongside Pink Floyd, arranging the ensemble parts for *Atom Heart Mother* and collaborating with Roger Waters on '70's *Music From The Body* soundtrack. Film scores were his speciality, but he also toured with Genesis, famously outraging an audience at Glasgow Apollo, forcing the headliners to cancel their performance. While on tour he was approached to write the music for an aspirin commercial and thereafter began worked extensively on recording adverts, theme tunes and incidental music for various TV shows. He wrote the theme tune for *Maths Today*, an educational programme many readers will remember from secondary school, before producing perhaps the most experimental KPM albums of all – two volumes of *Electrosound* ('72 and '75), which built upon the experiments of Delia Derbyshire and John Baker at The BBC Radiophonic Workshop, employing a Suitcase VC3 synthesiser and extensive use of tape loops.

Other notable personages include Neil Richardson, who penned the famous theme to *Mastermind*, as well as a gorgeous semi-classical piece from '70 entitled 'Pastal Pastoral' used on a public information film about Stevenage New Town as well as fleetingly on *Monty Python's Flying Circus;* David Lindup, see 'Birdwatch' from a strange '74 collaboration with Hungarian composer Gyorgy Behar, or 'Superperformance' also used on *Monty Python*, this time as the calling card of the 'Bishop' character; and James Clarke, who could produce pastoral masterpieces like 'Quiet Hills' (preceding *Kes* in '68) as well as 'Watchful Eye', which contains a tingling hazy electric piano *a la* Herbie Hancock, made six years later.

KPM found space for peculiar outings too many to mention, but it's always worth keeping an eye out for folk troubadour John Renbourn's *The Guitar Of John Renbourn* (KPM-1203) and *The Magic Of Bouchety* (KPM-1109), that is, French bassist and soundtrack composer Jean Bouchety. It's one of the best albums in the series, straddling Morricone-flavoured harpsichord and melodic sensibilities with traditional folk music (check out 'Growing Up', an odd Franglais take on the *Fingerbobs* theme).

By '78, Robin Phillips had left, founding his own – more electronic and experimental – company Bruton. KPM meanwhile began to flirt more regularly with disco and heavy-rock sounds (check something like 'Mountain Stream' by Richard Allen Harvey of prog-folksters Gryphon), but by '80 the canvas had broadened too widely, and label had become too niche. The final album in the 1000 Series, *Australia: Music Of The Nations Volume 5* (KPM-1258), a joint venture between Neil Thurgate and Gundhu Djoli, was a case in point. But while it didn't mean the end, it's fair to say KPM had lost focus and momentum and the golden age was over.

By the mid-80s, it seemed KPM had fallen out of favour, although there were still top composers on board, such as Paddy Kingsland from The BBC Radiophonic Workshop, who had written the memorable theme from dystopian kids' teatime classic *The Changes*.



Then something stirred the collective subconscious of music fans in the early '90s. Perhaps it was an acute nostalgia for a lost childhood, the hopeful world of the early '70s with its new town chic and colour-bled Mediterranean holiday brochures. And if in some quarters the renewed interest was borne from a love of kitsch, others recognised the class and craft. Wizard compilations such as '94's *The Sound Gallery* stirred a fresh appreciation for the library genre. That was good news for KPM – they would later set in motion a reissue programme for the 1000 Series – but not for collectors, who suddenly discovered that their treasured possessions – long unavailable (remember, they had never been given a standard release) which had previously fetched silly money, were suddenly available for less than a tenner on CD. The sudden affordability, coupled with the increasing appetite for retro lounge music (every bar or café you went into in '94 was playing the stuff) finally brought the KPM composers the exposure they had long deserved.

"There's a striking originality to library records from that time because they were all about the search for new sounds," John Cavanagh told *The Guardian* in 2008. "Back then, musicians weren't told what to do. Big companies also weren't so obsessed with focus groups and demographics, so musicians were allowed to have more open-ended adventures." My word, the adventures they had. S!

With thanks to Simon Mclean

Head over to shindig-magazine.com to hear KPM: An Evolution In British Library Music 1967-78*, our three-hour Qobuz playlist featuring much of the music here*

Joe Meek channels the "uncanny and futuristic", surrounded by his stable of artists in the early '60s

FREAK LIKE MEEK

Although the term "freakbeat" never existed in the mid-60s, collectors later coined it to describe those post-beat, pre-psychedelic sides by British mod and R&B groups that were tougher, gnarlier and wilder than their contemporaries.

Some of the pinnacles of the genre, by the likes of The Syndicats, The Buzz, The Blue Rondos and David John & The Mood, were recorded under the auspices of legendary producer JOE MEEK as he continued to target the next sensation, under mounting pressure to follow up his early '60s success.

BEN GRAHAM dims the lights, cranks up the valves, and gets freaky in Meeksville

By 1964, Joe Meek's star was already on the wane. The iconoclastic independent record producer had enjoyed his biggest hits in '61 and '62, with John Leyton ('Johnny Remember Me', a #1 hit in August '61, and 'Wild Wind', #2 in October) and The Tornados (the iconic 'Telstar', a UK and US #1 in September '62). But two years was a long time in the fast-moving pop marketplace of the '60s, and although The Tornados scored three further Top 20 entries in '63, they never replicated the success of their debut, while Top 10 singles for Mike Berry ('Don't You Think It's Time', January '63) and ex-Tornado Heinz (the classic 'Just Like Eddie', August '63) weren't enough to halt Meek's declining fortunes.

The unprecedented success of The Beatles had transformed the musical landscape and permanently shifted the goalposts in terms of what audiences wanted, and what radio and record companies were prepared to promote. Instrumental combos and solo crooners, balladeers and rock 'n' rollers were for the most part on the way out, while self-contained beat groups were in. Concurrent with the Merseybeat phenomenon came a wave of homegrown blues and R&B outfits, scruffy boy bands with two guitars, bass and drums rather than an immaculately styled singer plus a rotating roster of anonymous backing musicians. The Searchers, Herman's Hermits, The Hollies, The Animals, Manfred Mann and The Rolling Stones all followed The Fab Four into the upper reaches of the hit parade, helped by modish TV music show *Ready Steady Go,* which launched in August '63 and provided a natural platform for the beat and R&B bands just as *Six-Five Special* and *Oh Boy!* had done for the stars of the previous decade.

For once, Joe Meek had failed to hear this new world coming. Although his ground-breaking technical innovations and unique stylistic touches had virtually invented the role of the record producer as we now understand it (in the UK at least), the distinctive Joe Meek sound, created in his cramped DIY home studio above a leather goods shop at 304 Holloway Road and once so uncanny and futuristic, suddenly sounded dated and twee. Like his transatlantic rival Phil Spector, Meek was a genius who translated the sounds he heard in his head into the right records for the times. But now that the times were changing, Britain's foremost pop visionary had to either adapt his approach or go out of business.

It wasn't just the changes in musical fashion that were threatening Joe Meek. His personal life and mental health were also in crisis. Emotionally volatile at the best of times, Meek, like most gay men before decriminalisation in '67, was put under further pressure by the need to constantly conceal his sexuality from the world at large, while also finding ways to satisfy his demanding libido. Although there was no shortage of available young men in his immediate circle, Meek enjoyed the excitement and danger of cottaging – picking up strangers in public toilets for quick, anonymous sex.

In November '63 he was arrested for "persistently importuning for an immoral purpose", and despite suspecting a fit-up by the police, pleaded guilty and paid the £15 fine. But the money mattered little next to the shame and potential damage to his career of being outed in the press. Soon, a stream of chancers started phoning or turning up at Meek's door, not wanting to make a record as in previous years, but instead demanding cash in return for not going to the papers or police with invented stories of past liaisons. Meek always paid the blackmailers off, despite not being as flush as he once was. His financial backer, one Major Banks, pulled out as a direct result of the cottaging scandal, claiming £15,000 in moneys owed, while a court case over 'Telstar' saw all royalties temporarily frozen. As always, Meek buried himself in work, knocking back handfuls of the speedy diet pill Preludin to keep him going. But against this backdrop of commercial pressures, persecution, pill-popping paranoia, and potential penury, Joe Meek made some of the wildest records of his career.

The Outlaws had been Meek's house band, achieving name billing backing Mike Berry but also playing on records by many other vocalists, including John Leyton. Emulating the formula of Cliff Richard & The Shadows, Mike Berry & The Outlaws singles alternated with instrumental discs by The Outlaws alone. In April '64 however, possibly as a response to the beat groups (who Meek disparaged as "matchbox music" that all sounded the same), The Outlaws released their first vocal single. A cover of Little Richard's '58 evergreen 'Keep A' Knockin'' might not have seemed a cutting-edge release, but Meek no doubt saw how much the current crop of British beat bands owed to Richard, and simply decided to go back to the source. Featuring the wonderfully loose rhythm section of Chas Hodges on bass and Mick Underwood on drums, plus some particularly wild guitar by a teenage Ritchie Blackmore, The Outlaws' version of the song is at least as tough and modern as The Beatles' cover of 'Long Tall Sally', released two months later. Alas, it failed to chart, and Blackmore joined Heinz's backing band, The Wild Boys, before The Outlaws split in the summer of '65.

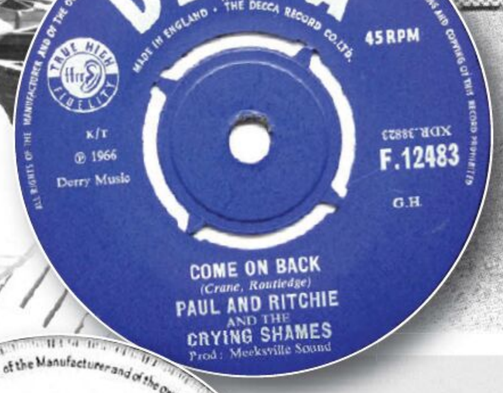
Also released in the same month was 'Baby Don't Cry' a slice of lively Merseybeat by Preston band The Puppets. Both 'Baby Don't Cry' and 'Keep A' Knockin'' featured different recordings of the same song on the B-side. 'Shake With Me', a Meek composition credited to the pseudonymous Peter Jacobs, is a dance-craze number with typically bizarre instructions ("shake your head like a goose") that's salvaged, in both cases, by the twanging guitar breaks.

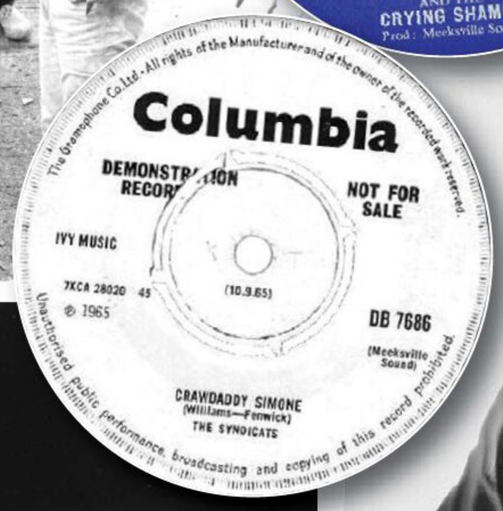
A third Joe Meek production released in April '64 was also a recording of a song from the first rock 'n' roll era, in this case Chuck Berry's 'Maybelline', set to a sped-up ska beat by North London R&B band The Syndicats. Featuring Tom Ladd on vocals, Steve Howe on guitar, Kevin Driscoll on bass, Jeff Williams on keyboards, and John Melton on drums, the band released three singles, each one better and freakier than the last. In January '65, a strong reading of Willie Dixon's 'Howling For My Baby' was backed by a fine Syndicats original, the punkish 'What To Do', dominated by Ladd's thuggishly flat vocals and Williams' Seeds-like organ.

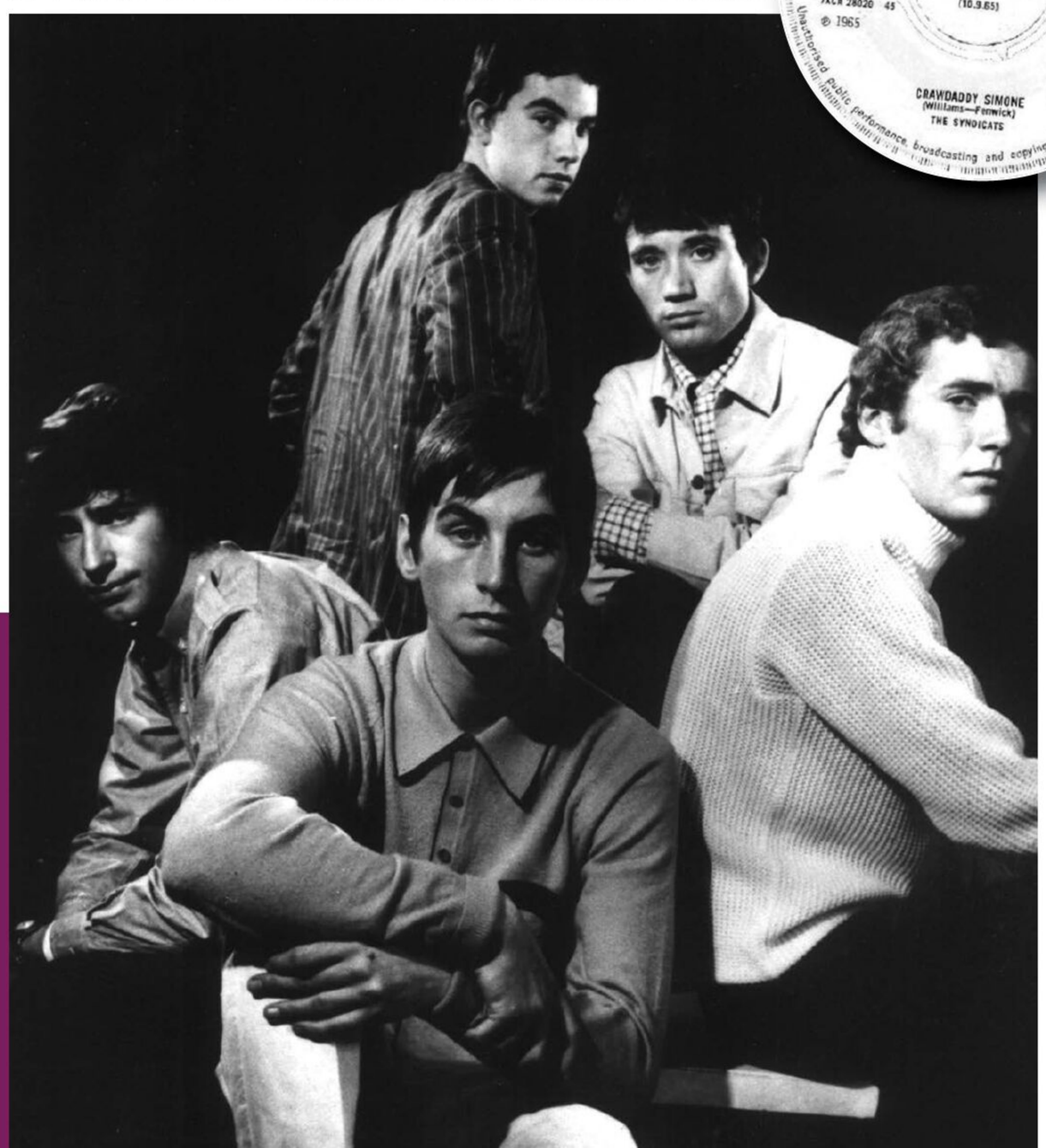
The Syndicats' career culminated with their third B-side, the all-time garage classic 'Crawdaddy Simone', eventually considered one of the greatest UK freakbeat tracks ever. By this time (September '65) the line-up had changed somewhat, with future Worrying Kynde singer John Lamb taking over on vocals.

"Meek described David John & The Mood as 'the weirdest and most unusual group I've ever worked with', though it's unclear what they did to earn such praise"

Meek's clique. Some of the artists who benefitted from the producer's wild touch in the mid-60s. Clockwise from top left: The Saxons, Blue Rondos, Riot Squad (with Mitch Mitchell, left), David John & The Mood, Syndicats, Crying Shames







The producer conjures new worlds inside 304 Holloway Road

Howe had left for The In Crowd (soon to morph into Tomorrow) and the legendary rave-up guitar solo is played by Ray Fenwick, while Paul Holm pebbledashes the walls with a hailstorm of rapid-fire drumming. In the studio, Meek encouraged the band to be as crazy as possible, with Fenwick recalling in the sleeve notes to his 2021 anthology *Playing Through The Changes* how Meek asked him to play "a wild guitar solo" and handed him an empty bottle, telling him to just run it up and down the strings.

When The Dave Clark Five hit #1 in January '64 with 'Glad All Over', Meek was convinced that the band (from just up the road in Tottenham) had purloined its stamping beat from his records. Constantly paranoid that other producers and songwriters were bugging his studio to steal his secrets, Meek noted that someone associated with The Dave Clark Five had recently dropped in on one of his recording sessions, which he felt was all the evidence he needed. In fact, 'Glad All Over' featured session drummer Bobby Graham, an original member of The Outlaws, and was co-produced by Adrian Kerridge, Meek's former assistant at Lansdowne Studios, so he may have had a point.

In any case, Meek was now on the lookout for fresh talent to get him back into the charts. North London blues band The Sheratons had recently been spotted by a pair of budding songwriters, Alan Blaikley and Ken Howard, who gave them a selection of their material ahead of an audition with Meek. When the producer heard them play the Howard/Blaikley composition 'Have I The Right?', he insisted on recording them right away, famously lining up all the band members, bar drummer Anne Lantree, on the stairs to stamp their feet in unison for the required relentless beat.

Meek took the resulting recording to Pye Records who saw Lantree as the band's selling point, renaming her Honey and the band The Honeycombs. 'Have I The Right?' went to #1 in June '64, re-establishing Meek as a force to be reckoned with in the beat group era. Unfortunately, certain sections of the music press accused Meek of copying The

"Meek was also allegedly experimenting with LSD around this time, something that may have impacted recordings like Shade Joey & The Night Owls' rave-up B-side, 'That's When I Need You Baby'"

Dave Clark Five's sound, and like The Tornados, The Honeycombs never replicated the success of their debut. In neat suits and tidily coifed hair, the band was too clean-cut for mid-60s teenagers, and follow-up singles, including an overcooked cover of 'Something Better Beginning' by The Kinks (whose 'You Really Got Me' had knocked 'Have I The Right?' off the top), lacked the gimmicky bite of their debut.

An exception was the frenzied 'Can't Get Through To You', the B-side of The Honeycombs' fifth single (and only other hit) 'That's The Way'. 'Can't Get Through To You' was the ultimate example of Meek's love of speeding up recordings to increase excitement levels, with the bluesy song powering along like a runaway train on the verge of going off the rails completely. "There's not a record made yet that wouldn't benefit from speeding up a little bit," Joe said on numerous occasions, no doubt while washing down another handful of diet pills with strong black coffee.

In addition to the Preludin, Meek was also allegedly experimenting with LSD around this time, something that may have impacted recordings like Shade Joey & The Night Owls' relentlessly perky version of 'Bluebirds Over The Mountain' and its rave-up B-side 'That's When I Need You Baby', written by saxophone player Bob Downes on the spot. Downes and Night Owls guitarist Ray Russell would both go on to become mainstays of the UK's experimental jazz scene from the early '70s onwards.

North London teenagers The Blue Rondos recorded numerous sessions for Meek, but only released two singles, moody blues shuffle 'Little Baby' at the end of '64, and the folk-rock-flavoured 'Don't Want Your Loving No More' in April '65. As ever, both got wilder on the flipside: the pounding 'Baby I Go For You' featured triple-tracked fuzz guitar (not played by Jimmy Page, despite rumours), while 'What Can I Do' was a tough ballad with a constant organ drone.

Meek described David John & The Mood as "the weirdest and most unusual group I've ever worked with", though it's unclear what they did to earn such praise. The band followed The Puppets down from Preston and recorded two singles at 304 Holloway Road. John (real name David John 'Miffy' Smith) had a distinctive blues voice, both urgent and sleazy, and in a classic Meek innovation their version of Bo Diddley's 'Bring It To Jerome' had its insistent rhythm augmented by the echo-wreathed sound of a lavatory chain being dropped into a biscuit tin. In contrast, the moody 'Diggin' For Gold' featured a muffled, reversed drumbeat, treated with phasing, that was equally revolutionary for the time.

With record companies increasingly rejecting his productions, Meek sought escape from the pressure by further developing his esoteric interests. He'd been holding seances on a regular basis since the late '50s, always initially attempting to contact Buddy Holly. Meek believed that the dead singer was his spirit guide, whose unfulfilled creative potential he was helping to channel. If Holly wasn't available, Meek would try for the shade of Eddie Cochran, and later was introduced by his favourite Essex medium, Mrs Smith, to a suicided Native American chief and Egyptian pharaoh Rameses The Great, who both joined Meek's otherworldly pantheon. Participants at Meek's seances attested that the producer took these spiritualist sessions as seriously as his musical ones, and the results were often equally as strange and inexplicable. As the tumbler moved of its own accord across the Ouija Board, an organ in another room would start to play or a twanging guitar would be heard. There were even reports of furniture lifting into the air and flying around.

Meek also developed an interest in ritual magick and started studying the works of Aleister Crowley. Perhaps he hoped that a powerful spell or conjuration would return him to the hit parade where payola to the pirate radio stations failed, and perhaps too he was drawn to the same mix of danger and excitement that had characterised his risky sexual encounters. Meek's spirit-hunting expeditions into Highgate Cemetery brought him into the orbit of paranormal investigator and occultist David Farrant (later associated with the so-called Highgate Vampire), who wrote on his blog in 2013 that Meek had approached him to "pursue a personal interest he had in Wicca and spiritualism".

Meek played Farrant some of the recordings he'd made of spirit voices in Highgate Cemetery, which Farrant found convincing. Meek had several meetings with Farrant and wanted to join his Wiccan coven, but Farrant, soon to form The British Psychic And Occult Society, quietly discouraged him. "I was concerned that Joe's desire to become involved in occult matters would have been somewhat dangerous due to his fragile emotional state at the time," he later wrote.

In the meantime, Meek continued to work his magic in the studio. The Cryin' Shames were a popular Liverpool R&B band fronted by twin vocalists Charlie 'Paul' Crane and Joey Kneen. Once again, Meek gave them two singles, the first coming out in January '66. Despite already sounding somewhat anachronistic, 'Please Stay' (a cover of the Bacharach-penned '61 hit for The Drifters) was Meek's last unequivocal production masterpiece and his final chart entry. The heart-breaking ballad seems to echo up from another age, one now irrevocably lost. Five years earlier, it would surely have gone to #1; as it was, it stalled at #26.

The B-side, 'What's News Pussycat' was a band original, though Meek must surely have enjoyed the title's play on Tom Jones' recent hit. Jones had recorded with Meek in '64, but Meek had been unable to sell the recordings; in the wake of Jones's later success, he licensed the songs to Columbia who released them as singles, to the Welsh singer's annoyance. The song is also a wicked parody of Bob Dylan, who Meek had recently seen live as a guest of Brian Epstein, but the lyrics seem to concern the revelations afforded by singer Joey Kneen's cat. It's tempting to wonder if this is related to the talking cat Meek met, and recorded, on a ghost-hunting trip to a haunted Essex farm the previous year.

Another excellent ballad, 'Nobody Waved Goodbye' was released in June, backed by 'You', a great mod dancer, but The Cryin' Shames split soon afterwards. Paul Crane and guitarist Ritchie Routledge put together a new version of the band, as Paul & Ritchie & The Cryin' Shames, who released 'September In The Rain' / 'Come On Back' in August. While the top-side was an unremarkable rock reading of the popular '30s standard, the flip was a moody soulful-rocker that found Meek perfectly mixing all the elements, turning down the tone on Derek Cleary's lead guitar for a distinctive muffled, reverb-heavy sound that teeters on the edge of feedback, while Routledge's vibrato chords, Crane's roughneck vocal, and harmonica and organ all prove that Meek was as adept at capturing the scuzzier atmosphere appropriate to punk-blues as he was the bright beat of early pop. Crane would go

MEEK THE IMAGE MAKER

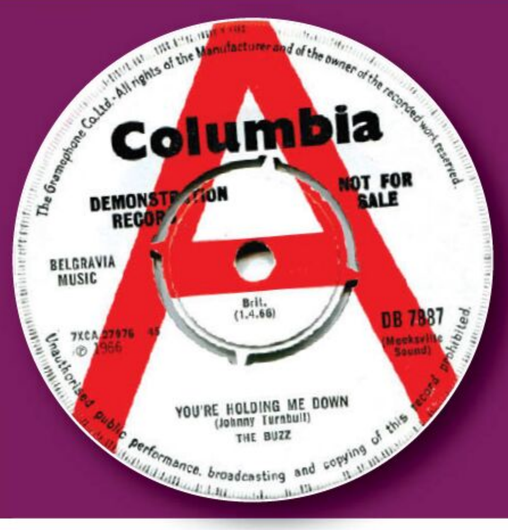
Two years after talking the teenage Heinz into peroxiding his hair in a bid to look like the frightening protagonists of *The Village Of The Damned*, the maverick producer forged the sharp look of beat band DAVID JOHN & THE MOOD

Joe Meek was very excited about the group name and the possibilities that our name gave to image and appearance. He sent us to Carnaby Street where we chose blue shirts with dark grey trousers and the good old Cuban heeled boot from Annelo's. David John wore a similar outfit but with a brown shirt.

To capitalise on our unusual name, Joe sent us to Max Factor where we were shown how to apply stage make-up to enhance our moody image. Our cheeks were shaded, and mascara applied to our eyelashes, white make-up went across our eyes to give us a blank staring expression. Considering that this was 1965 it was very far advanced for its time. It wasn't until the late '60s and early '70s that the Marc Bolans and David Bowies of this world began using make-up. This was all very well whilst the make-up artist was applying the stuff, but when we had to do it ourselves it became more amusing than moody. We tended to look like clowns – and soon the make-up was dispensed with. We looked so spaced-out anyway without the need for make-up!

As told to Jon 'Mojo' Mills by guitarist Pete Illingworth in 2002

David John & The Mood with Pete Illingworth, bottom left



"Meek's pioneering use of echo, phasing, distortion and sound effects were psychedelic long before psychedelia. It's equally true that the mutant R&B and long hair of the later '60s were alien to the producer"

on to sing lead vocals for Gary Walker & The Rain.

Arriving and promptly disappearing in April '66, 'You're Holding Me Down', the sole single by Edinburgh freaks The Buzz, may be Meek's rawest release. Tam White's crazed sneer is wonderfully at odds with the old-fashioned, trilling backing vocals, while the music, led by Johnny Turnbull's screaming guitar, continually accelerates into a trebly wall of sound, the voices finally echoing away into spiralling, manic glossolia.

The Riot Squad released several singles, but their standout track was the fuzz and organ-heavy garage raver 'I Take It That We're Through', also from April '66. By this time, the band, which had originally included Graham Bonney and Mitch Mitchell, featured guitarist Len Tuckey, later Suzi Quatro's bandleader and husband, alongside mainstay Bob Evans, whose droning, eastern-sounding saxophone solo is a highlight.

Some of Meek's finest recordings from this period went unreleased, including 'No More You And Me' by Tornados '66, a new incarnation of the 'Telstar' band that was actually Meek journeymen The Saxons plus keyboardist Dave Watts. Rejected by EMI because they thought any single bearing The Tornados' name should be an instrumental, 'No More You And Me' is a sophisticated, psych-leaning folk-rock song with a snaking, eastern sounding riff and a Latin-flavoured percussive breakdown.

Finsbury Park mods The Birds Of Prey demoed several songs with Meek in '66 but nothing was released until 'Love Gone Again' and 'City Lights' turned up on 2006 Castle Music compilation *Joe Meek Freakbeat: You're Holding Me Down*, alongside most of the other tracks discussed here. Singer Andy Purvis possessed a powerful, ear-catching blues voice somewhere between Steve Marriot and Kevin Coyne; they shoulda been contenders.

Jason Eddie & The Centremen was another Liverpool band that recorded the obligatory two singles with Meek, in their case the rocking 'Watcha Gonna Do Baby' / 'Come On Baby' in December '65 and, in June '66, a bizarre but brilliant cover of the Tommy Steele chestnut 'Singing The Blues' that sounds like the kind of post-modern deconstruction job Devo or The Residents would specialise in a decade later. As Jason Eddie was really Billy Fury's kid brother Albie Wycherley, the song stands as a kind of warped capstone to Britain's first rock 'n' roll era. But like another freaky Meek flop by The Impac, it was 'Too Far Out' for most listeners, then and now.

Joe Meek was a sonic alchemist who believed that sound was literally magic. Towards the end, he insisted he could drive people mad or control their mind with certain high-pitched frequencies generated by oscillators. Some of his recordings contained ghostly voices and sounds that even he couldn't explain. Certainly, his best tracks have an eerie atmosphere and an emotional impact that's impossible to define, let alone duplicate, even decades later.

He made music to be heard over the mono single speaker of a transistor radio or echoing evocatively around a busy fairground on a crisp British evening, mingling with the screams from the waltzer and the pop of air rifles on the shooting range. And while one could argue that Meek's pioneering use of echo, phasing, distortion and sound effects were psychedelic long before psychedelia, it's equally true that the mutant R&B, long hair and longer tracks of the later '60s were alien, even unfriendly territory to the producer whose work inadvertently made such things possible.

A born outsider who worked to change the system from within, Joe Meek revolutionised '60s pop. While the final three years of his career may not have yielded as many hits as in his heyday, the records he produced were often wilder and more forward-looking than those made by more critically and commercially feted rebels. That they're still being cherished and rediscovered today is testament to Meek's erratic but single-minded genius.

Having acquired the legendary "Tea Chest Tapes" Cherry Red's boffins are working their way through this treasure trove of unheard archival Meek material. The Telstar Story, The I Hear A New World Sessions *and titles by Heinz, David John & The Mood and Glenda Collins are out now. Many more will follow*

REPUBLIC OF MUSIC

EVERY HOME SHOULD HAVE ONE

TEENAGE FANCLUB
NOTHING LASTS FOREVER
Pema

Teenage Fanclub's eleventh full studio album 'Nothing Lasts Forever' is a beautifully rich and melodic album. The sound of a season's end, of the last warm days of the year while nights begin to draw in and thoughts become reflective and more than a little melancholy.

The band recorded 'Nothing Lasts Forever' - Blake, McGinley along with Francis Macdonald on drums, Dave McGowan on bass and Euros Childs on keyboards during an intense ten-day period in the bucolic Welsh countryside at Rockfield Studios, near Monmouth. You can hear the effect of that environment on the record - it's full of soft breeze, wide skies, beauty and space.

DEVO
ART DEVO (3LP & 7" BOX SET)
Futursimo

Futurismo proudly present the release all hardcore Devo fans have been waiting for: ART DEVO 1973-1977, a lovingly packaged 3LP & 7" Box Set housing rare, never before heard and obscure mind blowers sourced directly from the vaults of The De-Evolution Band. This anthology takes you from the band's initial conception in Akron, Ohio to the moment before the world woke up, in a collection of sonic and visual art that captures Devo at the dawn of industrial death.

The tracklist has been curated by the band, they come housed in a gold foiled archive box, and contain a set of double sided art cards - including a Scratch 'N' Sniff image. Includes liner notes by Mark Mothersbaugh and Gerald V Casale.

THE BOO RADLEYS
GIANT STEPS (30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION)
Two-Piers

The Boo Radleys reveal a deluxe reissue to celebrate the 30th anniversary of their genre-hopping masterpiece 'Giant Steps'. NME's 1993 Album Of The Year, named in the Top 20 of Pitchfork's The 50 Best Shoegaze Albums of All Time and lauded as one of 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die, The Boo Radleys' classic album, Giant Steps will be reissued, on special remastered vinyl almost 30 years to the day since its original release. The band's genre-ambiguous and widely-acclaimed masterpiece will become available to fans old and new via Two-Piers.

"Wow, now THIS is what music can be!" – The Quietus on Giant Steps

"It deserved the accolades and praise heaped on its shoulders." – The Line of Best Fit

"A masterwork..." – Pitchfork

BRIAN AUGER
AUGER INCORPORATED
Soul Bank

'Auger Incorporated' is a career spanning triple vinyl / double CD compilation of the legendary Brian Augers' music. Lauded and loved by artists as diverse as Mose Allison to Emma-Jean Thackray.

'Auger Incorporated' includes classic album tracks, rarities and live concerts performances, some of which have never released before from Brian's ground-breaking, genre busting catalogue, and reaches back to his early 60's debut as an poll-winning jazz piano prodigy, his transformation into swinging London's premier Hammond Organ player via his groups' The Steam Packet and Julie Driscoll, Brian Auger & The Trinity, and his flagship 70's band – The Oblivion Express - Auger's blend of jazz, R&B and pop idioms saw him credited as one of the earliest protagonists of jazz fusion.

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reviews then

Reissues, anthologies and compilations

Getting In Tune

An impenetrable, unworkable concept that begat a classic album, newly expanded to bursting point. **ANDY MORTEN** tunes in to The Note

THE WHO

Whos' Next / Life House

★★★★★

POLYDOR/UMC VARIOUS FORMATS

Richard Barnes, Who aide and lifelong friend of Pete Townshend, prosaically summed up *Life House* thus: "There were two groups: people that understood *Life House*, and people who didn't. The people who understood *Life House* included one: Pete Townshend. The people who didn't was everybody else he ever tried to explain it to."

It's late 1970 and Townshend embarks on writing the next Who album. They've been schlepping *Tommy* around the world stage for 18 months, documenting part of their increasingly incendiary live show on that summer's *The Who Live At Leeds* to enormous acclaim and a growing legion of fans. Townshend duly retreats to his home studio to demo a set of songs based around a concept that would leave his bandmates baffled and his own mental health ravaged. Space restricts us from even attempting to outline said concept here (go and read the books), but once the best part of 20 tracks were in the bag, the concept was jettisoned. With a harsh edit of album centrepiece 'Won't Get Fooled Again' in both the UK and US Top 10, nine tracks deemed "the best" (they're not, in this fan's opinion) became August '71's *Who's Next*, The Who's only UK #1 album.

'Baby O'Riley' is still this writer's favourite album opener of all time, setting the pace for a powerhouse set on which themes of love, spirituality and deep soul-searching are framed as anthemic stadium-pleasers, pastoral roots workouts and art-rock epics. Acoustic guitars and synths complement each other seamlessly (much more so than on *Quadrophenia*) – the four members of The Who rarely played and sang better together in the studio. Fans and scholars are repeatedly drawn to this period in The Who's career; it marked a prolific outpouring of material that ranks as some of their best. Yet attempts to present a cohesive snapshot of *Life House* have so far stalled, instead limited to ad-hoc bonus tracks on *Who's Next* reissues, collections of Townshend's demos, and after-the-fire radio plays and multi-media projects.

Does this mammoth 2023 revision do the job? There's no denying its breadth of ambition and sheer volume (155 tracks if you plump for the wallet-busting super deluxe edition), and the "no take unturned" attention to detail will thrill even the most obsessive fan. It's the format splits that may raise eyebrows. The balance of the Olympic Studios sessions ('Pure And Easy', 'Let's See Action', 'I Don't Know Myself', 'Time Is Passing' *et al*) would make a hugely covetable standalone 10-track album, yet they're confined to disc five of the super deluxe here. Likewise, the seven tracks taped at NYC's Record Plant in March only exist in their entirety on the super deluxe. Instead, the two vinyl variations opt for the December '71 San Francisco Civic Auditorium show spread across three albums, or Townshend's demos across two, the second disc of which contains just three tracks. Townshend's demos are things of wonder – that's never been in doubt – but is this a wise use of vinyl? The 2-CD offers a dozen selections drawn from The Record Plant, Olympic, SF and London Young Vic live shows, and a couple of demos; an ad-hoc mix that's unlikely to sataisfy fans nor newcomers.

The live sets are immersive, the new songs shining in the company of the '60s singles and *Tommy* segments, the band on typically super-human form. Disc six on the super deluxe reaches back to 'The Seeker', through the abandoned '70 EP, B-sides and out-takes and forward to mid-72 add-ons like 'Relay' and 'Long Live Rock', effectively mopping up every studio cut made between *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia*.

There are six variations of the straight *Who's Next* album on vinyl or CD, while the super deluxe adds a 100-page hardback book, 170-page *Life House* graphic novel, repro posters and concert program, and Blu-ray of Atmos/5.1 remixes. They provide serious bang for your buck, but you may need to forgo eating or putting petrol in your car for a couple of months to afford it. Who's too much?

"Townshend retreats to his home studio to demo a set of songs based around a concept that would leave his bandmates baffled and his own mental health ravaged"

Moon, Daltrey and Townshend discover what's next, late 1971

THE BEES
Sunshine Hit Me
★★★★

PIAS CD/LP

The Bees' debut album lit up the UK indie scene in 2002 and is now getting a remastered reissue. *Sunshine Hit Me* had a fun eclecticism rarely present on a debut – crackly ska, garage-rock, campfire singalongs and Tropicalia heat all get a look in on what was a Mercury Prize nominated album – not bad for an LP that was recorded in piecemeal fashion in a shed on The Isle Of Wight.

It's quirky and ambitious. Few groups are equally at ease whether they're covering Os Mutantes' 'A Minha Menina' or stretching out into moody jazz with 'Sunshine'. Other stand-outs include enigmatic oddity 'Lying In The Snow', organ and wonky piano instrumental 'Zia', and 'Sky Holds The Sun' with its Bacharach-in-Blighty feel. The coloured vinyl edition comes with a couple of bonus dub downloads, whereas the expanded CD has five extra tracks including the previously unreleased and woozily downbeat 'Seeds'.

Duncan Fletcher

BLACK SUN ENSEMBLE
Black Sun Ensemble Volume 2
★★★★

LION PRODUCTIONS LP

It's a bit convoluted, how this reissue of Black Sun Ensemble's debut came about. Summing things up: there are two versions of the album, the original vinyl released in 1985, and a 2000 CD version with different song titles and, in some cases, different tracks. In true historiographic spirit, Lion Productions is offering the band's self-titled jewel in two volumes – the first an exact reproduction of the original LP, the second based on its "alternate" version.

But before we turn into the Confused Math Lady meme, let's focus on the most important part: the music. It sits somewhere between Jerry Garcia's 'Love Scene' and stoner-rock, at times evoking The Incredible String Band, at others Sonic Youth, a mystical cousin to Scenic's desert soundscapes, or even the yang to Red Temple Spirits' yin. It follows the late Jesus Acedo's guitar (which is exploratory without being meandering) down a path of constant, time-freezing discovery.

Camilla Aisa

BF TRIKE
BF Trike
★★★

GUERSSEN LP

Indiana band BF Trike recorded their only album in 1971 (although two tracks here date from '77) and it was issued for the first time on Rockadelic Records in '89. That reissue went on to become one of the most valuable on the label and soon an original pressing was the only way to hear the music of this fuzz-heavy bluesy US power trio with flashes of Cream, Mountain and assorted late '60s heavy psych heroes.

The Trike are not on a par with their influences, but fans of dense garage-psych will love the dark brooding vibe of 'Time And Changes' (a leftover from Hickory Wind, the garage band from which BF Trike emerged) and the recording quality captured by Wayne Moss of Barefoot Jerry enriches the band's bass drums fuzz and harmonies to a pleasing degree, not least on the UK psych-tinged 'Magic Makin' Music Man'.

Richard Allen

LISTEN TO THE
SHINDIG!
BROADCAST
ON MIXCLOUD

BOWES ROAD BAND
Back In The HCA
★★★★

JAKARTA / UNO LOOP LP

There's a great story behind this fine reissue of the recordings laid down by these Hornsey College Of Art students in the early '70s. Jannis Stürtz (Habibi Funk / Jakarta Records co-founder) found a copy of the privately pressed record at a flea market in Berlin last year. It got played a lot in the label's office, and all agreed it was great. As there was absolutely no information online he tracked down Dave Pescod of the ensemble and set about excavating this curio to serve curious minds.

Shindig! is glad they did too, as it's an absolute joy. The six songs are pop with experimental edges, informed by The Beatles but somewhat unique. 'Doctor Doctor' is wigged-out in a Floyd meets Kinks way with prog-rock horn breakdown and primitive synths whilst 'Grass Is Green' is a gentle groove. File alongside "Forever Amber and then some".

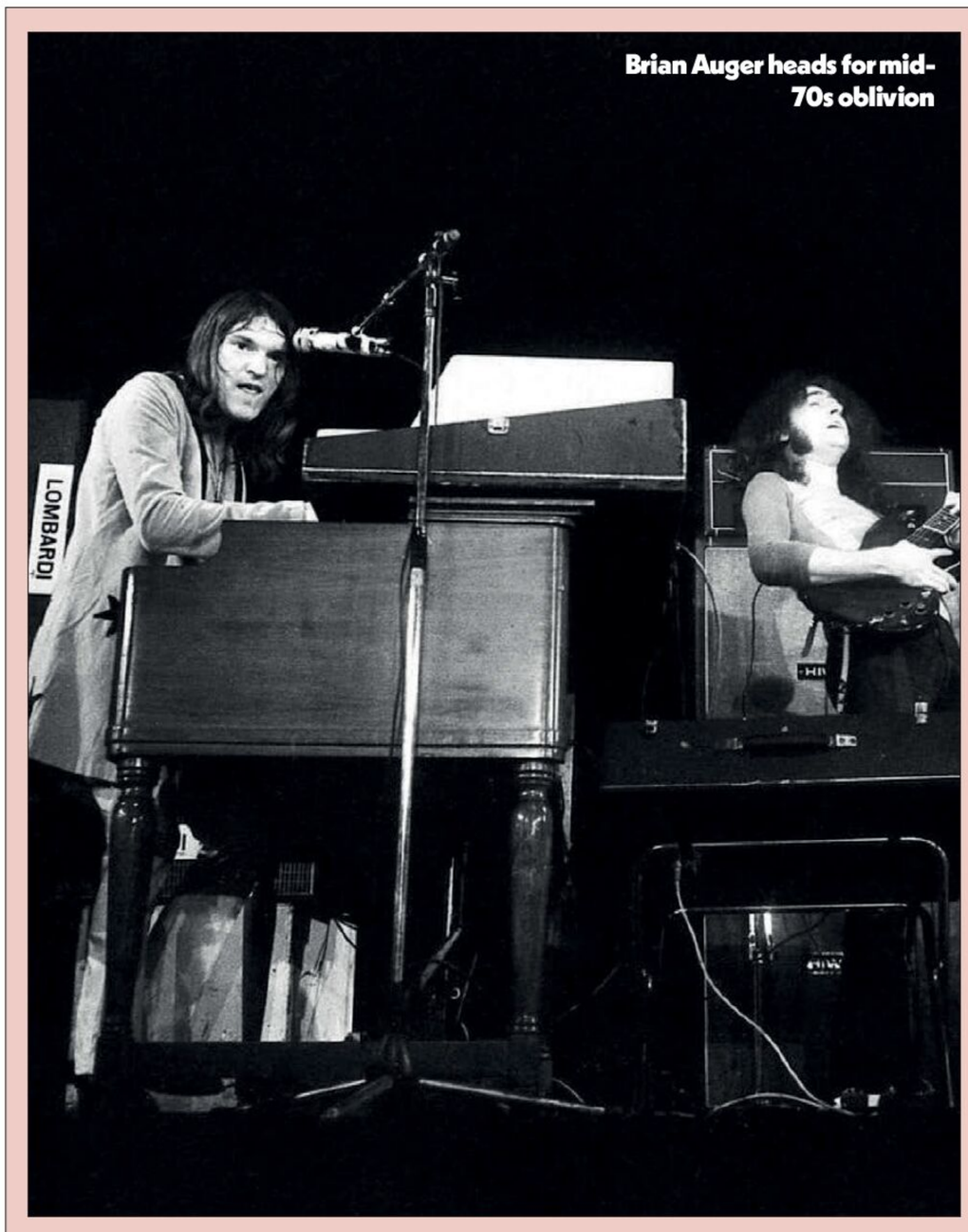
Jon 'Mojo' Mills

GENE CLARK
White Light / Roadmaster
★★★★★

BGO 2-CD

By 1966, The Byrds may have been embedded as the champions of LA folk-rock, but the band's songwriter-

Continues over



Freedom Dancers

BRIAN AUGER'S OBLIVION EXPRESS
Complete Oblivion
SOUL BANK MUSIC 6-CD/6-LP BOX SETS

Following the dissolution of The Trinity, ace organist Brian Auger chose to strike out in a new direction with the formation of The Oblivion Express. The soulful mod-jazz vibe that had typified The Trinity throughout the later years of the '60s was replaced by more overtly jazz-rock fusion impulses.

It only takes the opening track of 1971's self-titled debut (★★★★) for Auger & co to lay their fusion cards squarely on the table with a suitably forthright reworking of John McLaughlin's 'Dragon Song'. Swiftly followed by the 11-minute hypnotic groove of 'Total Eclipse', this is the sound of contemporary UK fusion at its finest.

However, rather than building on the strengths of that debut, the band opted for a change of direction and the disappointing A Better Land (★★) positively pales in comparison. Thankfully a return to form arrived the following year with the more overtly soulful Second Wind (★★★★), which found The Oblivion Express back on track thanks in no small part to the vocal talents of Alex Ligertwood, best illustrated on the opening 'Truth' and a reworking of Eddie Harris' 'Freedom Jazz Dance'.

Sporting a re-shuffled line-up and a cooler West Coast feel, '73's Closer To It! (★★★) continues the soulful slant and includes covers of Eugene McDaniels' 'Compared To What' and Marvin Gaye's 'Inner City Blues' but somehow lacks the gutsy immediacy of its predecessor. Possibly best remembered for lengthy opening cut 'Beginning Again' and the even lengthier mellow exploration of Wes Montgomery's 'Bumpin' On Sunset', guarantees Straight Ahead' (★★★★) the status of a must-have Oblivion Express title. Which brings us to '75's Reinforcements (★★★), the final album from the '70s model of the Express, on which the once distinctive sounding band sound adrift in the mid-70s doldrums of pseudo-Average White Band soul-funk.

Grahame Bent

reviews then

vocalist Gene Clark was growing tired of being overlooked, and so, as his bandmates ascended 'Eight Miles High', he decided to go it alone.

Honing his country-rock craft first with The Gosdin brothers and then banjoist Doug Dillard, Clark embarked on his solo journey proper with these two gems, 1971's *White Light* and '73's *Roadmaster*, the latter an astounding collection of unreleased sessions and singles.

There's little doubt that Clark's melody and harmony was integral to The Byrds' sound, and it endures throughout both albums. 'Full Circle Song' on *Roadmaster*, 'With Tomorrow' on *White Light*, even the personalised reading of Dylan's 'Tears Of Rage' display the beatific but fragile songwriting that was to become so central to '74's *No Other*. Supported by a battalion of integral musicians including Clarence White and Chris Ethridge, these reissues are essential if you don't own them already.

Sarah Gregory

CLASSROOM
Classroom
★★★★

FINDERS KEEPERS LP

There is truly nothing professorial about Classroom. If any school-related analogy needs to be drawn, then the Brussels-based combo would play the part of the alluring science lab. Unsupervised, if possible. Led by Daniel Schell, the quintet later morphed into Cos (a cult fave that over the past couple of years has received the reissue treatment courtesy of Finders Keepers).

The tracks selected here are appearing on vinyl for the very first time, making for a wild ride of endless discovery. It's European fusion at its most adventurous and unbridled: 'Sur Deux' might keep its foot in electric jazz, but when Pascale Son makes her entry, the songs refuse to stay in one place. Her dexterous vocals conjure fantasies of Stella Vander teaming up with Cathy Berberian.

Together with the instruments, which are at once literate and playful, they create aural happenings that are proudly unpredictable and merrily circuitous (the 10-minute 'Achille' in particular).

Camilla Aisa

GLENDA COLLINS
Baby It Hurts: The Holloway Road Sessions 1963-1966
★★★★

CHERRY RED 3-CD BOX SET

More gems from the legendary Tea Chest Tapes, this time featuring one of Joe Meek's favourite vocalists Glenda Collins on this stunningly in-depth collection.

From the very first track, an alternate take of 'I Lost My Heart At The Fairground', Meek's signature sound abounds on that trademark galloping rhythm and Collins' powerful voice to the fore. Versions of Glenda's single releases sound immaculate as they're presented here played at their original speed for the first time, and the excellent sleeve notes tie up the versions and effects gathered across the three discs, even down to the myriad takes needed to perfect the popping sound on 'Lollipop'.

For fans of the singer and the producer this is a must have selection and a brilliant advertisement for not only the session players involved (including Richie Blackmore, whose guitar playing is way ahead of its time) but also Alan Wilson, who mastered these fragile loops of ferrous plastic.

Henry Hutton

THE CREATION
We Are Paintermen
★★★★

DEMON LP

The Creation's clattering metallic freakbeat may not be a catalogue that screams "half-speed master deluxe edition" but this handsome new edition of their German 1967 album – pulled together from a year's worth of ad-hoc sessions by two line-ups of the band, yet still a cohesive snapshot of their pioneering formative sides – reveals nuances previously un-noticed by this particular writer and confirmed Creation nut. Subtle reverb, squeaks of guitar and some falsetto backing vocals enjoy ear-popping moments of clarity.

On the downside, the military stomp that underpins 'Painter Man' (surely one of the reasons it appealed so much to German record buyers) has been pushed so far into the red that it threatens to subsume the rest of the track, and the two "fake stereo" tracks 'Making Time' and 'Try And Stop Me' sound fluffy and diluted. The source claims to be "the original production master" rather than Alec Palao's 2017 remixes, the sleeve is the attractive Danish variation, and it's also available as a 2-CD edition containing the complete '60s recordings.

Andy Morten

THE FLOW
The Flow's Greatest Hits
★★★★

GUERSSEN LP

Just when you think you know what's coming. The Flow was one of those bands that we locals have heard about but never heard. New York City at the turn of the '70s, somewhere between low-rent and NO-rent (a communal loft at the corner of Grand and Mulberry – probably about $50 a month then, $25,000 now) and very scruffy-looking. Gonna be a pre-punk yawn, right?

Well, after the first two minutes of opener 'It Swallowed The Sun' you will think you've got this all figured out. Doomy, grey '90s power-trio metal, with nothing resembling "production". Which is already interesting, because it's two decades too early. But then, suddenly the song kicks in and you sit upright, suddenly realising that tunesmith Pete Fine was a prog-rock Arthur Lee with a folder full of musical references big enough to service three or four bands.

The songs are truly stunning. Unfortunately, the album was recorded on the cheap without much thought given to production. Unlike most similar undertakings, the sound is quite good and will not trouble you. This is well worth hearing.

Mike Fornatale

FREEDOM
Born Again: The Complete Recordings 1967-1972
★★★★

GRAPEFRUIT 5CD

Led by former Procol Harum drummer Bobby Harrison, psychedelic/prog band Freedom never quite found the success they deserved, despite recording a series of fine albums for labels like Atlantic, BYG and Vertigo between 1967 and '72, all of which are reissued on this comprehensive new box set, alongside singles, demos, extended cuts and an exhaustive booklet penned by David Wells.

The set kicks off with *Nerosubianco*, the soundtrack the band recorded for Italian director Tinto Brass, an excellent selection of keyboard-led, Procol-style pop the came out in '68, a precursor to such delights as the Keith Mansfield produced sunshine-pop single 'Kandy Kay' from '69. As time progressed, a radically restructured iteration of the band would trade in a much heavier sound – check out final album *Freedom Is More Than A Word:* a taut, blues-rock stomper that in a different universe would have seen the band ascend to the rank of Sabbath and Quo. A spiffing and much deserved re-evaluation.

Thomas Patterson

HAWKWIND
Warrior On The Edge Of Time
★★★★

ATOMHENGE LP

Warrior On The Edge of Time is Hawkwind at the peak of their powers and there really is no better way to listen than on this fresh vinyl reissue of Steven Wilson's classic Abbey Road mix of the album.

Recorded at Rockfield Studios, 1975's *Warrior* commemorates the band's longstanding relationship with fantasy writer Michael Moorcock, who not only contributes many of the lyrics, but provides the conceptual basis for the album via his novel *The Eternal Champion*. And despite mixed reviews at the time, *Warrior* can unanimously claim to be one of Hawkwind's most epic outings. Loaded with future live favourites including the classic Hawkwind fodder of 'Assault And Battery' and 'Magnu', *Warrior* also showcases the band's musical ability and versatility with the Neu-inspired motorik of 'Opa loka', and the delightful all-out psych of 'Spiral Galaxy'. Interspersed with snippets of soundscape-accompanied Moorcock-inspired spoken word, this reissue replicates the original rather magnificent gatefold artwork. Space-rock at its finest.

Sarah Gregory

ZEUS B HELD
Attack Time
★★★★

BUREAU B CD/LP

Zeus B Held spent six years as the keyboardist for German hard-prog outfit Birth Control, before becoming producer for the likes of John Foxx and Nina Hagen. But in between supporting others, he managed to find the time to craft his own extraordinary brand of post-punk inflected *avant-garde* electronica.

Attack Time is in fact Held's third solo album, released in 1981 and briefly influential, before being largely forgotten even by the artist himself. But make no mistake, this is a musically anarchic *tour-de-force* – Held plucking sonic inspiration from leftfield to create sounds that fall somewhere between The Residents and Daft Punk. Bouncing from the disturbed oral bombardment of opener 'Enfant Terrible' to no-wave funk to trademark German electronic euphoria, *Attack Time* grows progressively heavier but nothing is more intense than his cover of 'Drive My Car', which makes Devo's 'Satisfaction' feel like a lullaby. Experimental pop at its finest.

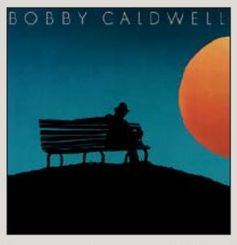
Sarah Gregory

a cellarful of soul

PAUL RITCHIE gets down with the latest soul and funk titles

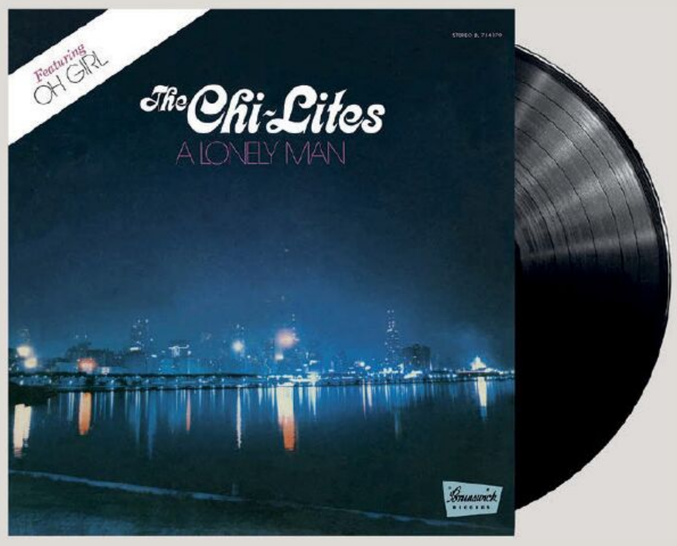
Philadelphia International Records featuring the prolific songwriting and production team of Kenny Gamble, Leon Huff and Thom Bell were the pioneers of disco and beyond. Ultimately, **Love Is The Message: The Sound Of Philadelphia Volume 3** (★★★★, PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL 8-CD+LP BOX SET) is a lesson in great packaging. The set includes eight albums on CD and an exclusive 12-inch vinyl disc, all luxuriously presented with a glossy hardback book packed with informative liner notes and stunning photography. If you thought disco was all glitterball and *Saturday Night Fever* glamour, the artists featured here cover a lot of ground. Full length titles from The Ebonys, MFSB, Bunny Sigler, Thad Jones & Mel Lewis, Billy Paul, The O'Jays, Monk Montgomery and Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes reveal a wide range of eclectic tastes from soul, funk and jazz.

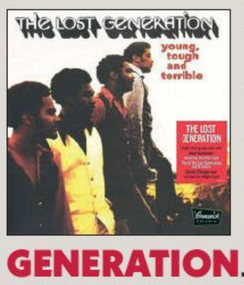
Speaking of *Saturday Night Fever*, **Tribal Rites Of The New Saturday Night** (★★★★, ACE CD/2-LP) is a deep dive into the origins of disco and the title is lifted from the writer Nik Cohn's infamous article that inspired said film. Subtitled "Brooklyn Disco 1974-75" and complied by Bob Stanley, the set mixes sweeping strings and soaring harmonies from the likes of The Intrepids with sublime socially conscious messages such as 'The Whole Damn World Is Going Crazy' by John Gary Williams. 'Welcome To The Club' by Blue Magic is the perfect invitation to the '70s underground New York club scene, decoding a theme of celebration and unity that resonates throughout this delectable collection.



American singer/songwriter, producer, arranger and multi-instrumentalist **BOBBY CALDWELL** recently passed, triggering tributes from across the worlds of soul, funk and hip-hop, whose artists have sampled his work extensively. Caldwell had a blue-eyed soul voice and a smooth style that fits neatly into a yacht-rock meets sophisticated modern soul territory. His 1978 self-titled debut (★★★, BE WITH LP) is a neat entry point, featuring the languid hit 'What You Won't Do For Love' sampled by 2-Pac and Aaliyah.

Chicago harmony group **THE CHI-LITES**, led by Eugene Record, released **A Lonely Man** (★★★, ORG MUSIC LP) on the Brunswick label in 1972. The LP proved to be a bigger hit than its predecessor *(For God's Sake) Give More Power To The People*, with the sprawling country-soul of lead track 'Oh Girl' scoring a big hit and a powerful rendition of Marvin Gaye's 'Inner City Blues (Make Me Wanna Holler)' proving equally enticing. It wouldn't be hyperbole to suggest the deeply harmonious sonic palette contained in these meticulous and exploratory grooves puts Eugene, who produced and penned most of the material, on a par with Jimmy Webb or Brian Wilson.





Staying in Chicago and another Brunswick release from 1972, **Young, Tough And Terrible** (★★★, ORG MUSIC LP) was the second and final album by short-lived group **THE LOST GENERATION**. The group had a late '60s soul sound that recalls Motown groups like The Four Tops and Temptations with forays into Holland/Dozier/Holland-inspired funk. Serviceable covers of Al Green's 'Tired Of Being Alone' and The 8th Day's 'You've Got to Crawl Before You Walk' suggest a band happy to play it by numbers, rather than striking out with anything truly distinctive.

There can be fewer uplifting musical notes than the first few rumbling seconds of '(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher And Higher', the defining track on **Higher And Higher** (★★★★, ORG MUSIC LP) by **JACKIE WILSON**. From an era when albums were still afterthoughts, this LP hangs together well, capturing the singer at the peak of his powers. Perennial soul classics like 'I've Lost You', 'I'm The One To Do It', 'You Can Count On Me' and 'Open The Door To Your Heart' are nestled in with some fine oldie soul ballads.

Texas born guitarist **MELVIN SPARKS** is regarded as a godfather of Acid Jazz. He first came to prominence in the bands of Jack McDuff and Lou Donaldson, then part of the Prestige Records funk team, under the tutelage of producer Bob Porter. When Porter left to set up Eastbound/Westbound Records, he signed Sparks. The album **75** (★★★★, WESTBOUND LP) is a soul-jazz masterpiece and included members of Funkadelic and vocalist Jimmy Scott, who sang on the soulful 'I Got To Have You' and 'If You Want My Love'. The block party breaks of 'Get Ya Some' and the funky 'Get Down With The Get Down' are the killer stand-outs.

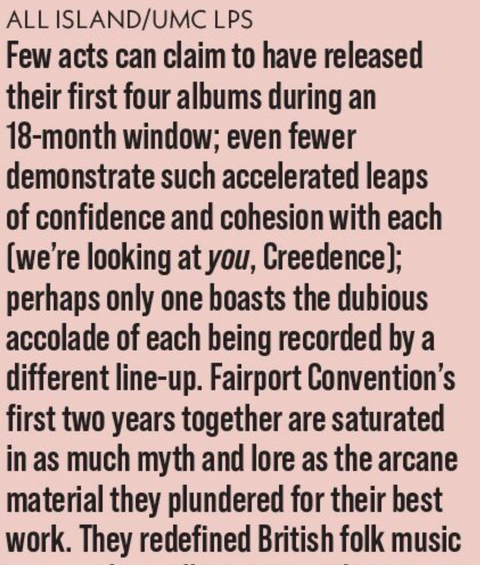
If you're thirsty for something raw and dirty to get down to, you should look no further than **Buzzsaw Joint Cut 9** (★★★★ STAG-O-LEE LP). There's no such thing as smooth and sophisticated on show here, so expect a barrage of savage sounds that have made the Buzzsaw Joint club a London institution. Featuring killer '50s/60s hip shaking R&B such as Margaret Lewis' ravishing 'Somethin's Wrong Baby', George Young's Little Richard-style rocker 'Can't Stop Me' and girl group stomper 'My Love' by The Shondells amongst the many rough diamonds.

Moving into the modern day, **THE KEVIN FINGIER COLLECTIVE**'s **Not Strictly Soul** (★★★★, ACID JAZZ CD/LP) is a truly addictive blend of exotic dance flavours featuring sassy guest vocalists Diane Ward, Jo Ann Hamilton, Josi Dias and a cameo from reggae legend Derrick Harriot. Producer/deejay Fingier is Argentinian and this may in part explain the distinctly twisting continental rhythms that effortlessly blend Latin, soul, new breed R&B and jazz breaks into the mix. It's a party album from start to finish.

Northern soul was once confined to the rain sodden, industrial northern towns of England but is now an international movement of sorts. **THE FAITHFULL BROTHERS**, who hail from Tel Aviv, are a case in point. They've mastered the authentic four to the floor beat on their self-titled debut (★★★★, MISTER MELLOW'S MUSIC CD/LP). Opening instrumental 'Night Man' will have you reaching for the talcum powder. 'The Town I Live In' and 'Dance My Hurt Away' are spinning, stomping, shuffling manifestos that recall the energy of early Dexys and the club soul of Geno Washington and Jimmy James & The Vagabonds. They also wisely leave room for a couple of soulful ballads to close the night.

Swarbrick, Denny, Thompson and Mattacks. Lightning in a bottle

Bricking It



FAIRPORT CONVENTION

Fairport Convention

★★★★

POLYDOR/UMC LP

What We Did On Our Holidays

Unhalfbricking

Liege & Lief

ALL ★★★★

ALL ISLAND/UMC LPS

Few acts can claim to have released their first four albums during an 18-month window; even fewer demonstrate such accelerated leaps of confidence and cohesion with each (we're looking at *you*, Creedence); perhaps only one boasts the dubious accolade of each being recorded by a different line-up. Fairport Convention's first two years together are saturated in as much myth and lore as the arcane material they plundered for their best work. They redefined British folk music in ways that still resonate today.

After years of ad-hoc reissues and expanded CD editions, these straight vinyl repros bring together an astounding body of work in one hit for the first time. It's a reminder of their greatness, as if one was needed.

June 1968's self-titled debut finds the rag-tag North London sextet looking to Dylan and Richard Fariña and covering Joni and The Merry-Go-Round while trying to sound like Jefferson Airplane. It possesses an intoxicating otherworldliness unlike anything else on the UK rock scene at the time. Judy Dyble is replaced by Sandy Denny for *What We Did*. Released just six (or seven, depending on who you believe) months later, it ramps up the debut's composite parts: more folky, more rocky, more original. Iain Matthews departs before June '69's *Unhalfbricking*, enabling Denny and Richard Thompson to develop their songwriting chops, while conversely redrawing the folk-rock landscape with the still astonishing electrified 11-minute reading of 18th century broadside 'A Sailor's Life'. Almost incidentally, it reached #12 on the UK chart and spawned a novelty hit single resulting in the group's only *Top Of The Pops* appearance. December's *Liege & Lief* followed it into the Top 20, Dave Swarbrick's fiddle and mandolin and Richard Thompson's bravura electric guitar flourishes adding fresh colour to a set that relied on progressive arrangements of traditional pieces rather than original material. Within weeks, Denny and founder member Ashley Hutchings were gone. The group survived but this alchemy would never return.

Most readers will be familiar with at least one of these albums, even folk naysayers – their cache and reach has increased enormously over the past couple of decades. They remain a unique document of a time when rock music was evolving at a furious pace while espousing the quiet joys of brotherhood.

Andy Morten

PEGGY LEE

Fever: The Velvet Lounge

★★★★

BEAR FAMILY CD

Has there ever been a voice of such crystalline purity and perfection as that of Miss Peggy Lee?

Anyone harbouring any doubts should grab an earful of this dazzling and heavily annotated (in best Bear Family tradition) collection which brings together 30 tracks spanning the years 1948-62, during which Peggy is heard accompanied by small combos, big bands and full orchestras.

When it comes to poise and instantly recognisable velvety vocal warmth no-one has ever done it with such sparkle, verve and an innate sense of style as Miss Lee. Whether it be the pathos and melancholy of 'Johnny Guitar', the frantic dynamics of 'Lover' or the from-the-hip sassiness of 'Why Don't You Do Right?', Miss Lee covers all bases. Then of course there's the '58 smash 'Fever' with its unforgettable stripped-down backing track, 'I'm A Woman' and the frankly irresistible 'Sweetheart' and 'You Deserve'.

Grahame Bent

LINDISFARNE

Fog On The Tyne

★★★★

PROPER LP

What is with Lindisfarne and sausage rolls? There's an undercooked one on 'Peter Brophy Don't Care', while the title track opens with one of rock's all-time worst lyrics, "Sittin' in a sleazy snack bar sucking sickly sausage rolls". This odd obsession aside, here's the Newcastle band's second getting the 180g vinyl treatment and sounding good over 50 years on.

Alan Hull's songwriting is rightly revered, but he is side-lined here by Rod Clements' enigmatic 'Meet Me On The Corner', all bouncy bass and Ray Jackson shining on vocals and harmonica. This isn't to say that Hull is slumming it, his contributions including the classic 'January Song', strangely uplifting despite the downtrodden lyrics, and the bittersweet 'Alright On The Night'. Even the title track, which is often dismissed as a novelty, sounds great on this new pressing; the lyrics remain trite but the middle eight's fiddle-fest positively flies.

Peter Gallagher

MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA

Live At The Berkeley Community Theater 1972

★★★★★

EQUINOX 2-CD

From Miles Davis' *In A Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew* to The Tony Williams Lifetime and Mahavishnu Orchestra all within the space of two and a bit years, things moved at a quicksilver pace for John McLaughlin during the late '60s and early '70s.

By late 1972 Mahavishnu was riding high on the back of the success of *Inner Mounting Flame* and having just recorded its sequel *Birds Of Fire*. This FM radio broadcast of a complete show broadcast in November of that year captures the band in all their white-hot fury and intensity. With Messrs Goodman, Hammer, Laird, Cobham and McLaughlin all cruising at an interstellar altitude, the performances never fall short of thoroughly breath-taking. There never was an outfit like Mahavishnu until John McLaughlin made his vision a reality, and there hasn't been one since as this high-quality live recording testifies all too vividly.

Grahame Bent

JOHN MARTYN

London Conversation

The Tumbler

BOTH ★★★★

BOTH PROPER/UMC LPS

The early lap of John Martyn's career is often overlooked. His first two, 1967 and '68's *London Conversation* and *The Tumbler,* aren't particularly representative of his writing or later trademark sonic experimentation, but these glistening facsimile mono editions from Proper aim to redress this.

Infamously recorded for a pittance in just hours, the austere *London Conversation* scrubs up best – just a precociously gifted teenager and his guitar (except on 'Rolling Home', on which he scrubs angrily away on a buzzing sitar). Representative it ain't, but the songs are strong, and it sounds like Martyn is sat just feet away. Jazzier and quirkier, *The Tumbler* showcases his dazzling open-tuned picking, but suffers a little from Al Stewart's muffled production. Paul Wheeler and Harold McNair fill out the sound, with McNair providing lovely trills on 'The River' and 'Fly On Home', although his atonal parping on 'The Gardeners' is hard work. Fascinating, groovy baby steps.

Martin Ruddock

MELANIE

The Magic Bus

★★★

Y&T CD

Limited to just 1,000 copies, *The Magic Bus* is an extended interview and radio session with Melanie, hosted by deejay Curtis Schwartz of Miami radio station WBUS in April 1972.

The interview section might be a play-once-only proposition, but the verbal sparring between host and guest is surprisingly entertaining. Schwartz acts like he's the bad cop intent on tripping up a suspect, but Ms Safka hold her own, at one point breezily shooting down his request

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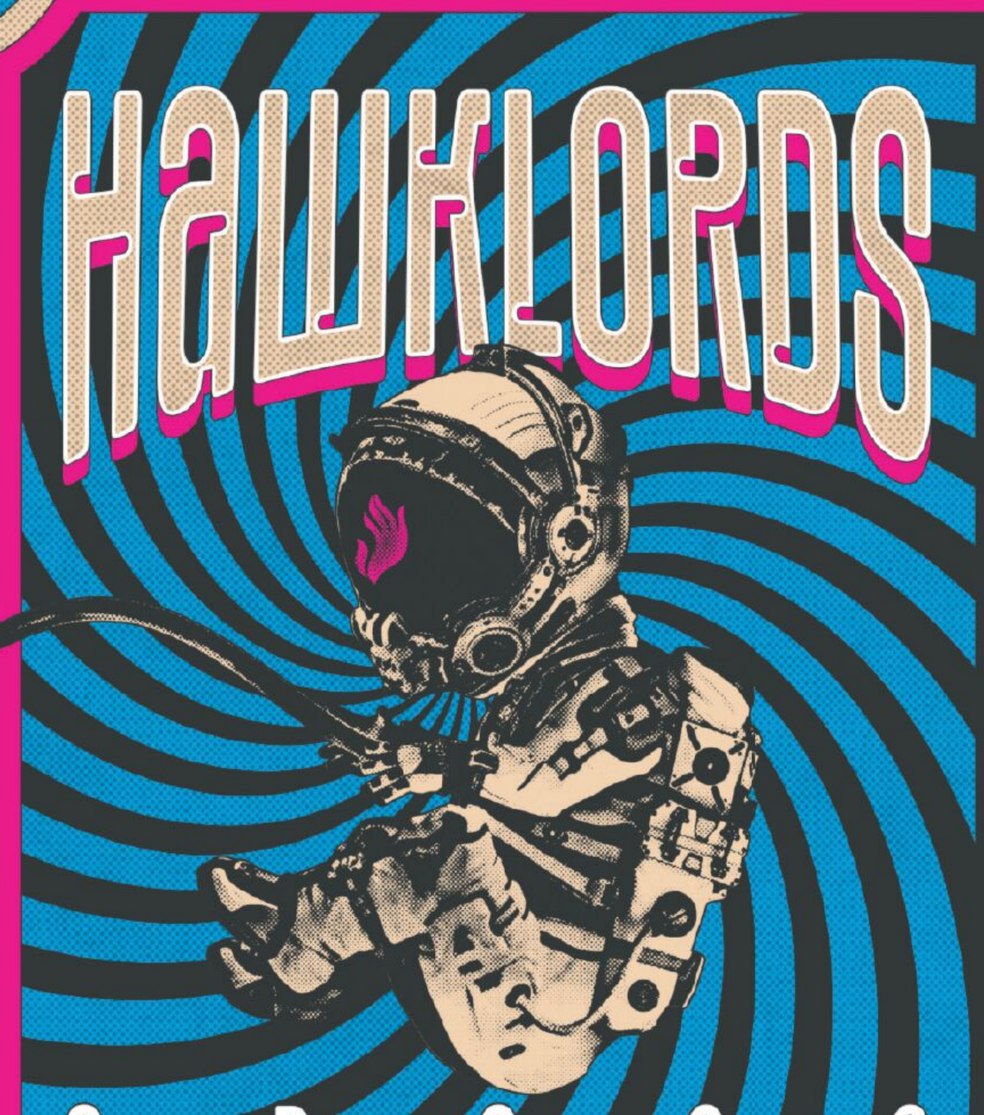
HAWKLORDS



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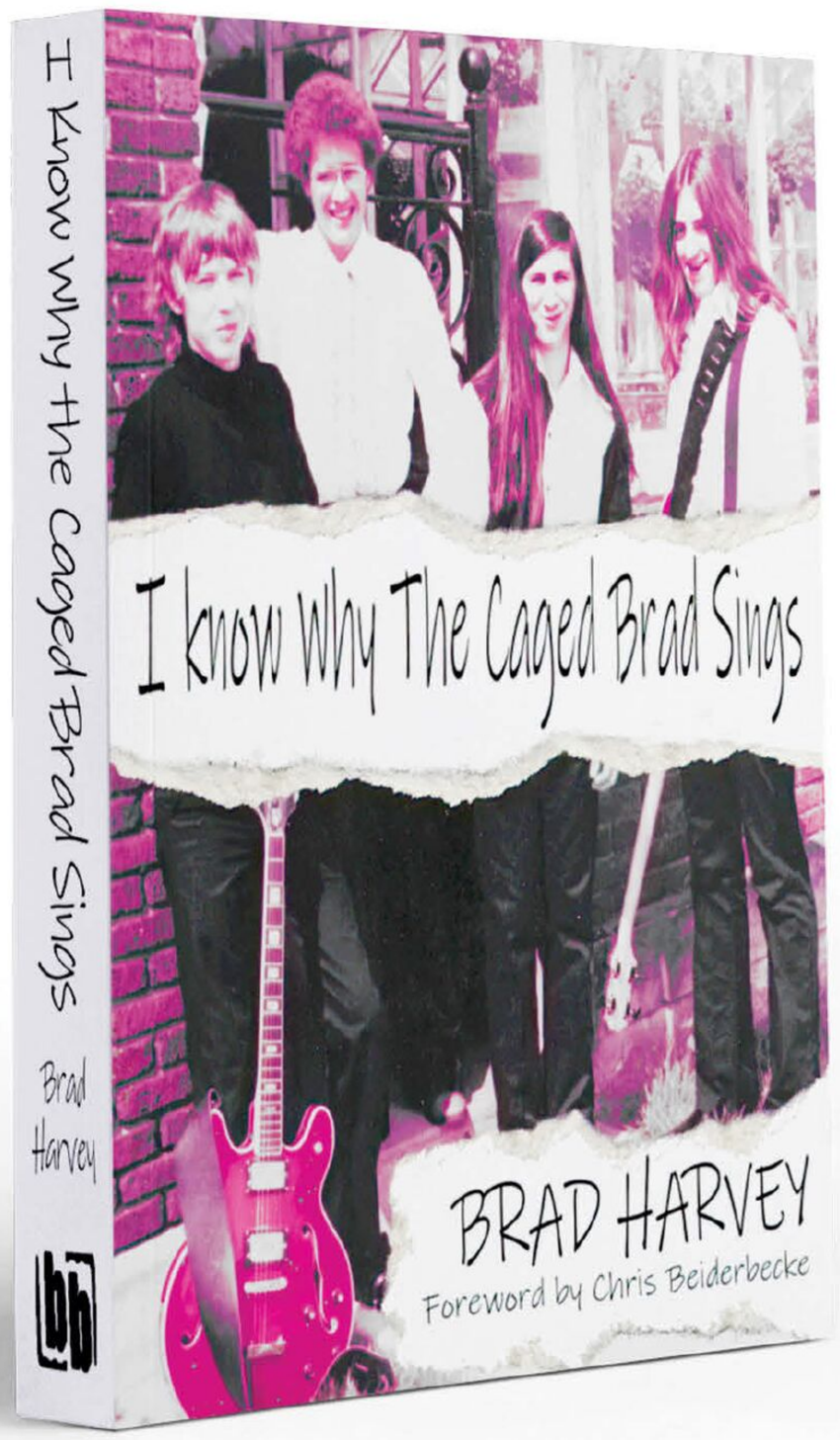
Jonathan Turner, digital reporter
WHBF-TV (Rock Island, Ill.) OurQuadCities.com



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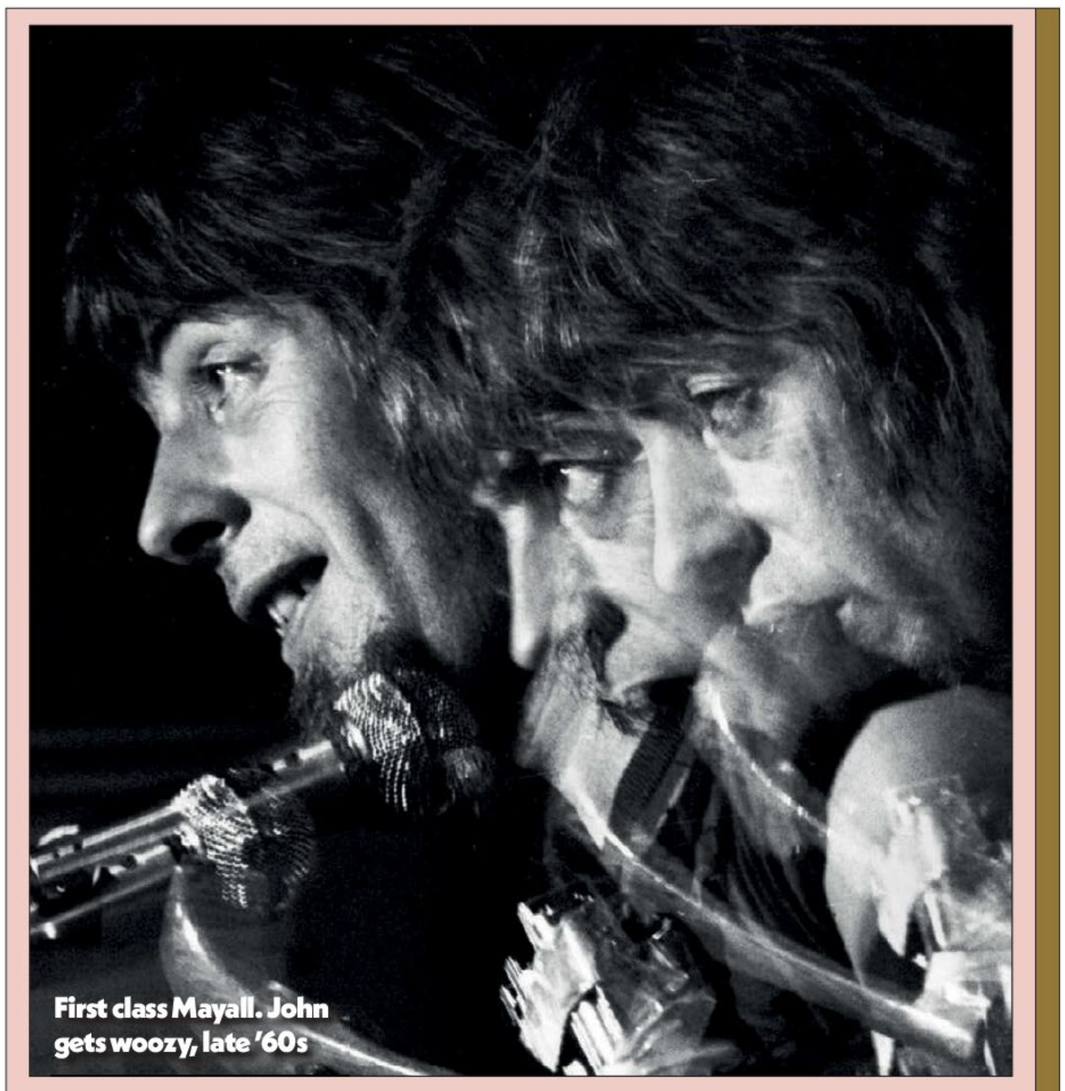

First class Mayall. John gets woozy, late '60s

Breaking Blues

JOHN MAYALL / JOHN MAYALL'S BLUESBREAKERS

John Mayall Plays John Mayall
A Hard Road
Crusade
The Blues Alone
Bare Wires
Blues From Laurel Canyon

PROPER/UMC LPS

JOHN MAYALL'S BLUESBREAKERS

Live In 1967

FORTY BELOW CD/LP

The reissue of six of John Mayall's classic '60s albums charts his journey from mid-60s British blues pioneer through the various contrasting editions of The Bluesbreakers to the dawning of his solo career towards the end of the decade.

The titles in question not only represent a sizeable chunk of his core discography, they're also a reminder of Mayall's key role as both the savant and standard bearer for what became the British blues boom.

The first title in this batch, **John Mayall Plays John Mayall** (★★★★), captures the then pre-Bluesbreakers Mayall very much alive and kicking at the legendary Klook's Kleek in December 1964. Backed by a band that included future Bluesbreakers John McVie and Hughie Flint there's a strong R&B flavour to the material, which doesn't feel a million miles from what Georgie Fame was doing with The Blue Flames. Fast forward a couple of years and three key Bluesbreakers titles – '67's **A Hard Road** (★★★★) and **Crusade** (★★★★) featuring the prodigious talents of Peter Green and Mick Taylor respectively, plus '68's swan song *Bare Wires* – document the evolution of The Bluesbreakers' sound from the straight up small group electric blues of the first two albums to the more leftfield jazz-influenced expanded ensemble approach of the latter. Also included as part of this vinyl reissue programme are '67's **The Blues Alone** (★★★★) on which Mayall quite literally goes solo with a little help from Keef Hartley on an album of atmospherically pared-down performances, and '68's **Blues From Laurel Canyon** (★★★★), his first post-Bluesbreakers release that anticipated his move to the US west coast.

And to complete the season's John Mayall vinyl motherlode we have the third and final volume of **John Mayall's Bluesbreakers Live In 1967** (★★★★), a decidedly raw and rough-round-the-edges selection of historic audience recordings from various London clubs featuring Mayall backed by Messrs Green, McVie and Fleetwood.

Grahame Bent

for 'Candles In The Rain'. However, they do eventually bond over a mutual love of The Incredible String Band. Half the tracks are culled from Melanie's then-current album *Gather Me*, no bad thing as that was her most mature work to date. The songs stand strong despite being shorn of their studio arrangements, and the singer's son Beau Jarred Shekeryk has done a remarkable job on the remastering considering everything was recorded on one mic.

Peter Gallagher

MOEBIUS

Aspirin

★★★★

CURIOUS MUSIC CD/LP

Pioneering electronic musician Dieter Moebius passed away in 2015. This posthumous release is a welcome addition to the body of work he amassed as a solo artist as well as with Cluster and Harmonia.

Recorded in 2005, the six tracks are built on insistently repetitive percussive patterns punctuated by unusual and occasionally unsettling industrial sounds. The effect is sometimes harshly abrasive, as on the unrelenting 'Synthetic', but also hypnotic, not least the carnivalesque 'Providence'. Moebius makes little concession to melody, the closest to anything approximating mainstream music being the swirling 'Spiraea'. A late gift for fans, wrapped in a sleeve designed by Devo's Mark Mothersbaugh.

Clive Webb

THE MOSQUITOS

This Then Are The Mosquitos

★★★★

KOOL KAT MUSIK 2-CD

Formed in New York in 1978, The Mosquitos were always a monstrously under-rated force. Sharp performers and fantastically incendiary live, their charismatic front man Vance Brescia wrote snappy, catchy songs. There was just one problem: they looked, and often sounded, like throwbacks to The Beatles' Hamburg-Cavern Club days. Although they built a solid following in their Long Island/New Jersey backyard, those pesky A&R types didn't get it and, following the release of a solitary 5-track EP in '85, the band called it quits.

Arista boss Clive Davis heard it and got The Monkees to record 'That Was Then, This Is Now' as their comeback single in '86 – a surprise US hit. It was proof Brescia's songs could transcend their original retro styling and this 47-track compilation – engineered and produced by *Shindig!* contributor Mike Fornatale – unearths an embarrassment of garage-pop nuggets, including the Who-esque stomper 'Changed My Mind'. Recorded live, it's a reminder of how tight and compelling The Mosquitos were.

Chris Twomey

PAPERNUT CAMBRIDGE

Mellotron Phase: Volumes 1 & 2

★★★★

GARE DU NORD CD/2-LP

It's tempting to review this handsome reissue (two 10-inch LPs, originally from 2017 and 2018, combined in a carboard outer sleeve) in the form of the helpful one-liners the KPM and De Wolfe library records appended to their track listings for the benefit of their broadcast industry users.

In that spirit, *Phase 1* includes "provincial psychedelic stroll with humorous observations" ('Puppet Shop'), "mod-friendly sports theme – amphetamine badminton?" ('Advantage Soho') and "precious moments on a wistful roundabout" ('Dreams Of Persephone'). *Phase 2* is more considered and perhaps less immediate, but still has 'Sergeant Major Mushrooms' (polished medals, waxed moustache, stifled giggles from the girls) and 'Parker's Last Case' (a lost balloon floats pensively over London rooftops). Recorded for contemporary music library Ravenwood Ltd using genuine Mellotron and Chamberlin sound patches, plus real, authentically dry and funky bass and drums, *Mellotron Phase* has the ideal instrumental soundtracks for all your many moods.

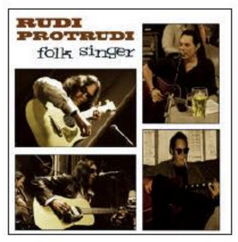
Ben Graham

RUDI PROTRUDI

Folk Singer

★★★

BLACK GOLD LP



Doing acoustic based albums is nothing new for Rudi Protrudi. His country album (*It's A) White Trash Thing* was released in 1993. Since then, he's embarked on a few similar outings, and it must be said The King Of Fuzz has a good voice for stripped back blues and folk songs.

Folk Singer was recorded in Tel Aviv, Israel, back in 2014, with a crack team of players. The studio recording is a delight, warm and full. By far the best song is the last, 'Come Wander With Me', a haunting ballad that originally appeared in an episode of *The Twilight Zone.* A slowed down acoustic take of Love's '7 And 7 Is', a long-time favourite in The Fuzztones' set, also works really well. The blues and country covers add little to the originals and pass by easily enough, with the singer and players in good form, but they don't merit repeated listens. If the format can follow more imaginative material, like the stronger cuts here, the next album will be interesting.

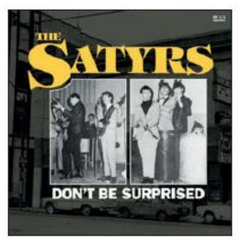
Jon 'Mojo' Mills

THE SATYRS

Don't Be Surprised

★★★

BEAT ROCKET LP



It's another of those stories. One local band in a fishbowl (in this case, Asheville, North Carolina) and they're infinitely better than

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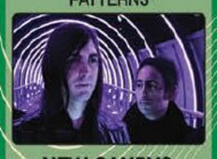
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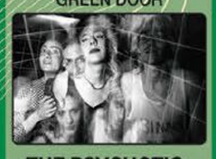
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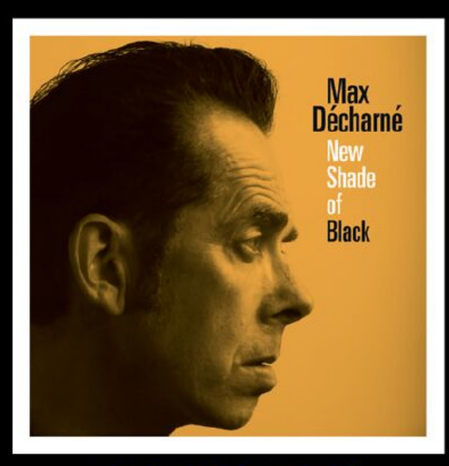

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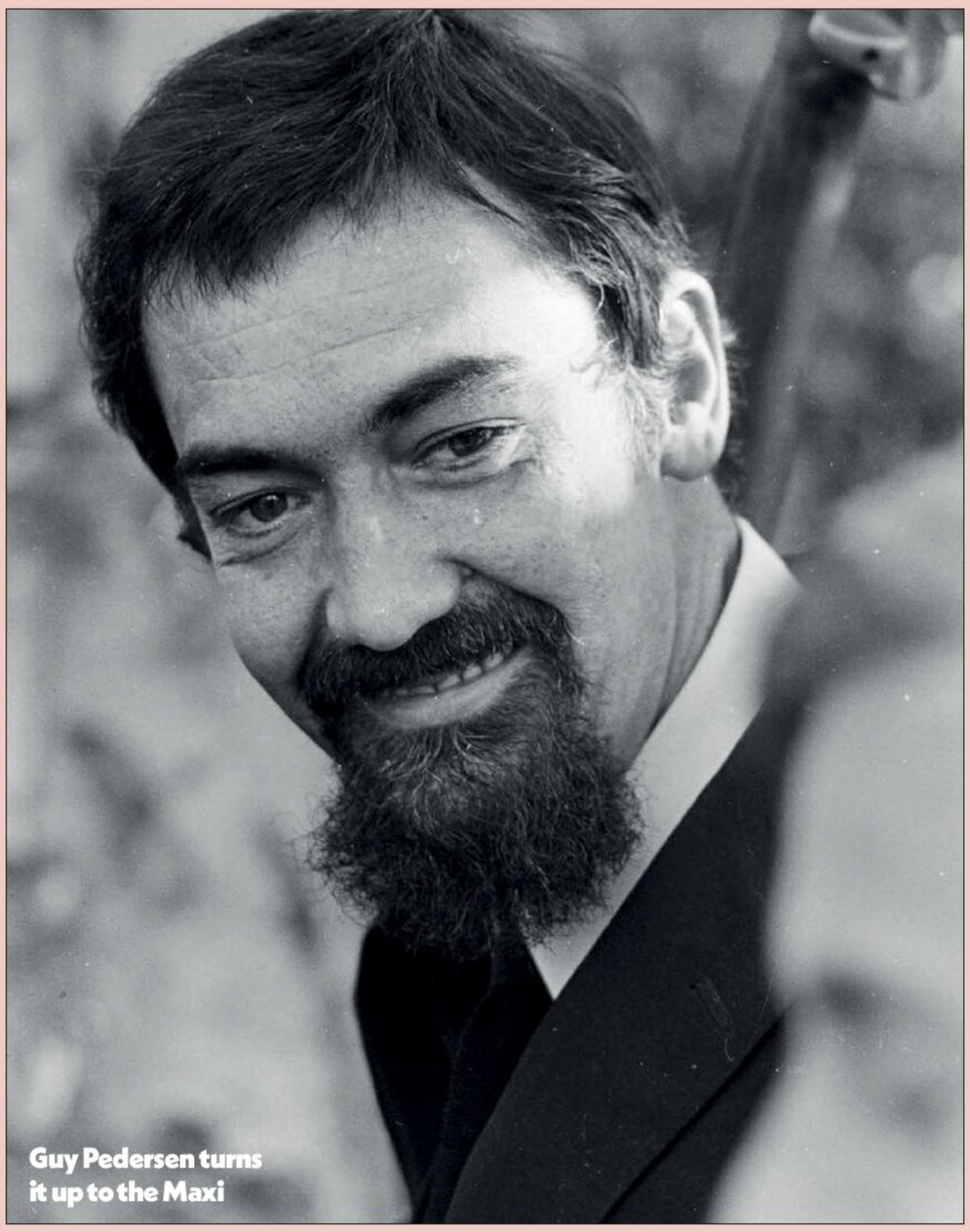
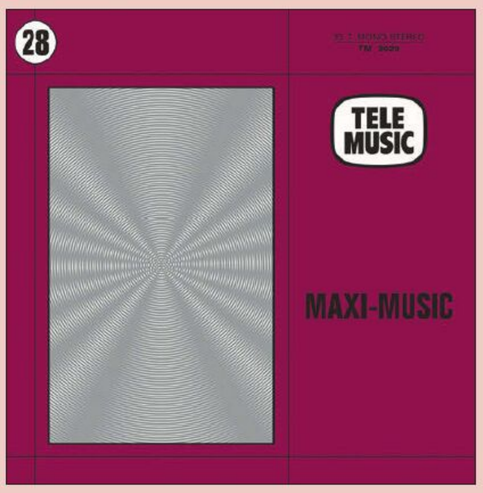


Guy Pedersen turns it up to the Maxi

Turn On The Tele



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Various Tele Music Titles

ALL BE WITH LPS

When it comes to the highly specialised world of library recordings, certain labels immediately spring to mind here in the UK: KPM, Chappell and De Wolfe. Things are a little more under the radar with our continental cousins, which is why Be With's ongoing programme of reissuing long out of print and highly collectable titles from the expansive discography of France's Tele Music is such a welcome development.

The pick of the latest batch of reissues are those from drummer, percussionist and composer Pierre-Alain Dahan and bassist extraordinaire Guy Pedersen. Variously a member of Arpalys Disco & Co, Voyage, Tumblack and The Jef Gilson Septet, the three titles from the much-feted Dahan – *Continental Pop Sound, Rhythmiques* (with synth player Mal Camison) and *Neo Rhythmiques* (with guitarist Slim Pezin) – take in a spectacularly wide range of compositional styles from psychedelic rock and shades of prog to soulful funk, novelty pop stylings, acutely atmospheric cinematic interludes and more. There's inevitably considerable focus on beats and the rhythmic foundations of individual tracks and nowhere more acutely than on the 'Phasing Drums' and 'Rhythmiques' series of compositions.

Rampant wide-ranging jazz influences are much tom the fore on Guy Pedersen's extraordinary powerhouse creation **Maxi-Music** (★★★★). To call this album extraordinary feels like an understatement bordering on the absurd. Pedersen manages to nimbly traverse and navigate an utterly bewildering scope of diverse styles and influences from deep fusion musings to neo-Gainsbourg/Birkin moods ('Bass In Love') and, most spectacular of all, the circuitous 13-minute closing *piece de resistance* 'Kermesse Non Heroique'. **Contrebasses** (★★★) meanwhile has the feel of a free-flowing bass-centric wander through a challenging stylistic labyrinth. Also well worth exploring are Michel Gonet's **Phasing News Volume 1 & 2** (★★★★).

All told, these Tele Music reissues add up to one hefty pile of listening guaranteed to stimulate even the most jaded of palates.

Grahame Bent

any of the other local bands. And it's always for the same reason, isn't it? Songwriting. Usually by multiple band members. And this is no exception. It *is* an exception in some other ways, though. For instance: these guys got together *before* the garage-punk era and were basically a white R&B band. They only started playing Beatles/Stones-inspired music in 1964 because that's where the money was.

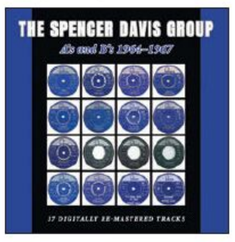
You've probably heard 'Don't Be Surprised' if you're a '60s USA garage fan. It resurfaced in the '90s, an LP's worth of other recordings was unearthed, and here we are. The song was recorded in the back room of a hi-fi store, masquerading as a studio, and it's a brilliant, ripping minor-key slab of urgency. 'Ticky Tacky' is as good a snotty Seeds-Do-Dylan nugget as you'll ever hear. The rest of the original songs are more in the R&B vein, and they do not disappoint either.

Mike Fornatale

THE SPENCER DAVIS GROUP
A's And B's 1964-1967

★★★★

BGO 2-CD



Those who are familiar with the output of The Spencer Davis Group will know the level of quality to expect from this release – those who are new to this outfit's work are in for a treat. The band's Fontana hits are all present and correct, with teenage wunderkind Stevie Winwood overshadowing the group's founder Spencer Davis on much of the material. Whether they're playing atmospheric blues, Ray Charles-style R&B or the Hammond organ-led dancers that propelled them up the charts, the overwhelming impression is one of not just the tightness of the performances but the feel they exhibit across the genres.

As is ever the case, a few B-sides are filler material, however, there are also some amazing keyboard instrumentals and unexpected gems. It's opportune to remember that whilst purist northern club deejays in the '60s undermined the Stones by playing the originals of their covers before their set, Spencer Davis and the band were, conversely, always held in high regard.

Henry Hutton

ST JOHNS WOOD AFFAIR
St Johns Wood Affair

★★★★

THINK LIKE A KEY CD

A longstanding guitarist for the original Nirvana, Keith Smart takes centre stage with his own band St Johns Wood Affair, whose 2016 debut album has been reissued with six extra tracks.

It's a loving homage to the psychedelic sounds of the '60s, with lyrics that convey a wide-eyed sense of wonder at the world. Ley lines, eternal sunshine and even kaleidoscope eyes illuminate the songs. What at first sounds like an attempt to enlist in *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* soon expands stylistically. There's the droning sound of raga on 'Love Light & Peace', slide guitar embellishes the gently acoustic 'Clouds Hill', and bluesy electric solos snake around Hammond organ on 'Fantastic Book Of Colours' and the darkly swirling closer 'The Tripster'. Among the additional tracks are several demos and a faithful cover version of the Nirvana song that gives Smart's versatile band its name.

Clive Webb

SUPERGRASS
Life On Other Planets

★★★★★

BMG LP/LP+10"/3-CD

Originally released in (gulp!) 2002, Supergrass's superb fourth album *Life On Other Planets* remains a copper-bottomed collection of tunes. Much was made of their new "mature" direction at the time, but Supergrass was always a band that could straddle the creamy glam of 'Seen The Light' and the hilarious cartoon punk of 'Never Done Nothing Like That Before'.

The new double-vinyl edition comes with bonus live collection *Live Forms*, notable for a fire-breathing 'Rush Hour Soul' captured in Elysee Montmartre. The 3-CD version contains an expanded *Live Forms* plus a rocket-load of studio demos, B-sides, out-takes and live tracks. Their crunchy take on Neil Young's 'The Loner' is great but most tantalising is the brace of cracking instrumentals that show the 'grass could've convincingly reinvented themselves as a sort of Oxford Moog Cookbook. The pastoral, proggy 'Everytime', funky, daft 'Stinkfinger' and gorgeous Vangelis-does-Morricone drift of 'Tronic' are particularly wonderful. Cosmic.

Martin Ruddock

THUNDER & ROSES
King Of The Black Sunrise

★★★★

GUERSSEN LP

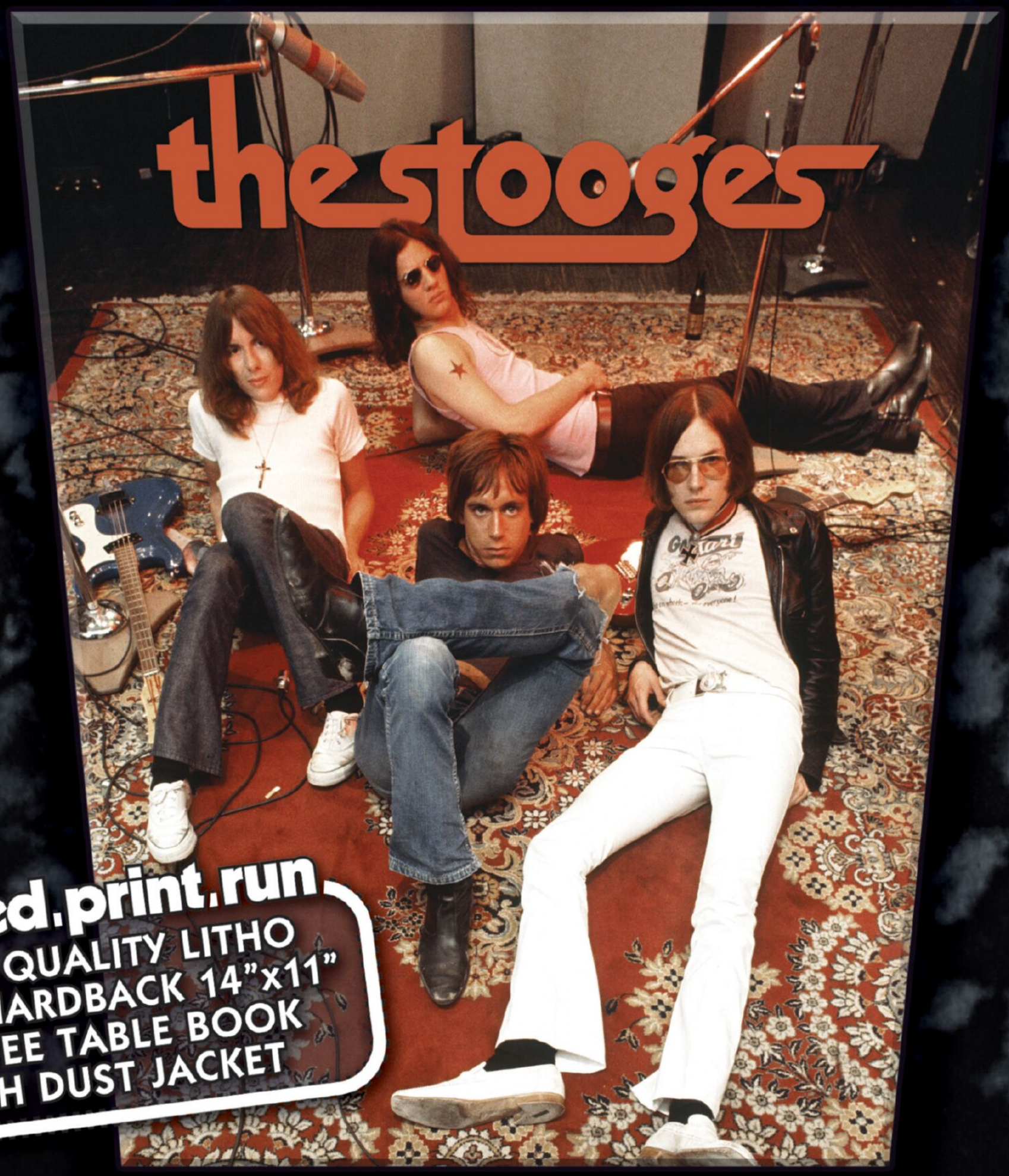
Originally released on United Artists in 1969 and much sought-after for the opening cut 'White Lace And Strange' – a number that manages to sound more Cream than Cream and which was also somewhat surprisingly covered by Nirvana (US).

King Of The Black Sunrise does not break the heavy blues-psych mould but has enough character to remain memorable, the guitar tone of Chris (later Christina) Bond is ragged yet controlled, sending the band towards the MC5 or SRC dimension, whilst the killer cover of 'Red House' keeps them orbiting the Hendrix galaxy. On the epic 'Moon Child', the rhythm section of bassist Tom Schaffer and drummer George Emme valiantly hold Bond on earth as (s)he constantly attempts to launch into space. 'Dear Dream Maker' is the trippiest nugget on the record, all swooping bass, ringing guitar and acid lyrics cementing *Sunrise*'s reputation as a minor classic.

Richard Allen

wintergarden

PUBLISHING PRESENT



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The Stooges' performances and recording sessions
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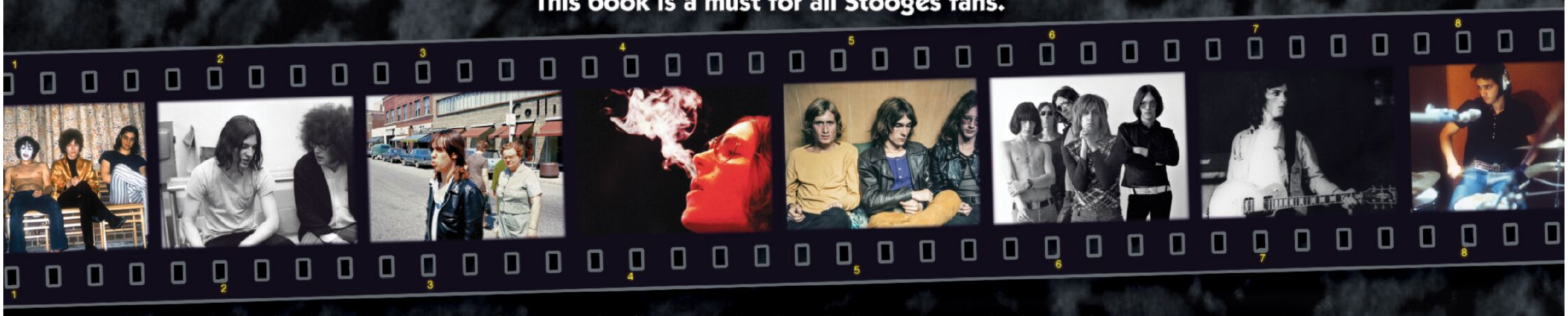

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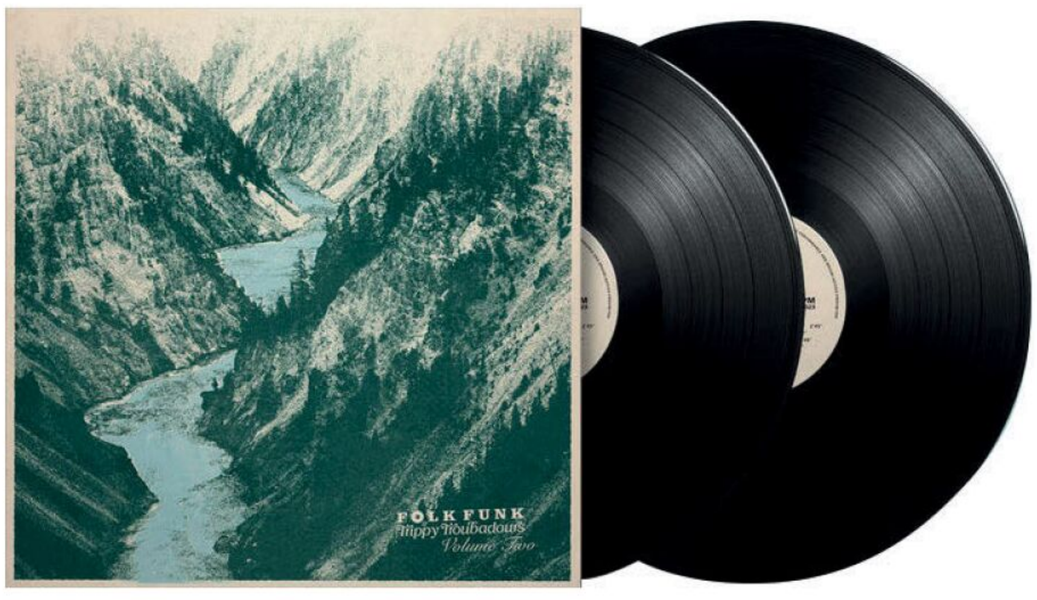

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Algo Salvaje Vol 4
★★★★

MUNSTER LP

Welcome to the box of firecrackers that is the latest instalment in Munster's *Algo Salvaje* series of compilations.

Mined from the riches lurking deep within the vaults of Peru's state-owned label MAG, the accent remains on the wild, frenzied and untamed treasures of the potent Peruvian garage-psych boom, Whether it be Los Saicos' spikey instrumental 'El Entierro De Los Gatos', Delai Alamos con Los King Stay's 'El Grito De Los King', Melcochita's 'El Sicodelico' or the rough and ready out-thereness of Jean Paul El Troglodita's 'Fuera De Atraccion', the highlights arrive thick and fast. And just for good measure, the collection also boasts four memorable covers in the contrasting contours of Los York's take on Don Covay's 'Mercy Mercy', Traffic Sound and Los Silvertons' reworkings of Cream's 'I'm So Glad' and 'White Room' and, best of all, Los Junior's spectacular reimagining of Jimi Hendrix's 'Third Stone From The Sun'.

Grahame Bent

VARIOUS ARTISTS
England Swings: Lux And Ivy Dig That UK Sound
★★★★

RIGHTEOUS CD

For the latest instalment of weirdo miscellany culled from the record collections of The Cramps' Lux Interior and Poison Ivy, the focus falls on acts from this side of the pond, 28 cuts of bloodthirsty rock 'n' roll, jazz and whatever the hell they've found down the back of the sofa, plucked from 1956 to '62. (We'll ignore the fact that the comp's title is taken from a song that didn't come out 'til '65.)

Within are big ticket artists like Dudley Moore, Johnny Dankworth, Joe Meek and, erm, Max Bygraves, but as ever, the real treats are the titty-shakers from the one-hit wonders and ultra-obscurities; anyone for Count Jim Moriarty's 'You Gotta Go Oww!' or the fabulously named Gale Warning & Her Weathermen's 'Met Rock'? Marvellous stuff, showing there was a whole lot more going on in pre-British Invasion Blighty than Pearl Johnson and Teddy Carr.

Thomas Patterson

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Folk Funk & Hippie Troubadours Volume Two
★★★★

RE:WARM CD

One of the musical highpoints of 2022 was *Folk Funk & Hippie Troubadours*, a delightful collection of mostly unknown cuts from private press folksters and outsider singer/songwriters, compiled by Paul Hillery, an undisputed master of tracking down the most arcane and esoteric records known to humankind. Paul's back for a second volume, and once again it's a beauty, a grab bag of obscure cuts old and new that deserve much wider recognition.

The shebang kicks off with mid-noughties Free Design-acolytes Grand Union, whose 'Morning Brings The Light' is a swirling flute-led beauty, before tripping through a further 16 numbers of equally blissed-out loveliness from such non-household names as Len Udow, Cascada, Summer Rain, Frank Pyne And Loon Saloon and, perhaps best of all, Harris & Crane Band, whose 'Change Is Me, Change Is You' is a wonderfully earnest slice of mid-70s hippie frippery. Great gear, with nary a duffer in sight.

Thomas Patterson

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Hearts For Sale! Girl Group Sounds USA 1961-1967
★★★★

ACE LP

Ace Records' deep dive into the world of '60s girl groups has reached its final chapter, offering another killer selection of forgotten 45rpm cuts on *Hearts For Sale!* And if a lot happened between 1961 and '67, making rock and pop unrecognisable in a matter of years (or, in some cases, months), the world of beehives and well-mannered romanticism seems to have possessed a perfectly lovely stillness, as if existing out of time. As a (probably surprising) result, these songs' charm has done nothing but grow. More than time capsules, they're fanciful escapist pleasures.

Featured on the album's cover are The Lovettes, whose 1966 B-side 'Lonely Girl' brims with sweet heartbreak, while it's a Fran-Cettes head-bopping number from the same year that gives the compilation its name. Other notables include The Fashions' soulful 'Surfer's Memories', The Vel-Vetts' 'You Really Never Know Till It's Over' and the Motown-leaning 'One Way Street' by The Swans.

Camilla Aisa

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Klar!80
★★★★

BUREAU B CD/LP

The German underground scene of the early '80s was thrilling, daring and highly innovative. bureau b's latest compilation *Klar!80* pays testament to some of those artists who were at the dark heart of alternative German music.

Celebrating the DIY ethos of the day, Klar!80 was a Dusseldorf-based cassette-only label that, between 1980 and '82, released 18 home-made cassettes and what is now a handsomely priced three-EP box set. The music has been painstakingly restored and digitised from those original cassettes to expose the work of a set of musicians who were performing with freedom, independence and daring – experimenting in whatever way they saw fit. *Klar!80* samples a handful of these artists ranging from the proto-techno hypnotic chaos of 'Und Piloten' by Umsturz, the incessant beats and bass of Roten Stern Belgrad and the dub David Byrne of Europa's 'Dein Zauber'. This is fun, uninhibited, and ever so slightly unhinged.

Sarah Gregory

VOLUME
Requesting Permission To Land
★★★

WEIRD BEARD LP

Remastered by Jack Endino (Nirvana, Mudhoney, Nebula *et al*) for this 20th anniversary reissue Volume's 1993 debut comes with impressive credentials. Home for the band was California's prosaically named Twentyfourpalms, frontman Patrick Brink was once upon a time vocalist with Fu Manchu in one of their earliest incarnations, while Scott Reeder of Fu Manchu also appears on drums.

Emerging as part of the developing desert/stoner-rock scene and exhibiting a pronounced empathy for the primal driving power and scuzz of Blue Cheer and The Stooges, much as you'd expect, Volume kick up one hell of a racket with their unapologetically unrestrained take on seriously fuzzed-out acid-rock. While also using atypical desert/stoner-rock instruments like Theremin and Hammond, the raw and under-produced feel of the album manages to effectively recreate the overloaded analogue bombast so synonymous with vintage Blue Cheer.

Grahame Bent

WILLIAM PENN AND HIS PALS
Swami: The Complete Recordings
★★★

GUERSSEN LP

When you have a celebrated garage/psych 45 as revered as 'Swami' immortalised on *Pebbles Vol 3: The Acid Gallery* there's always the danger it can overshadow everything else in your catalogue. And to a degree that's the case here.

For the record, William Penn And His Pals was a Bay Area garage act whose line-up included Greg Rolie, later of Santana fame, on organ and vocals and, in their earliest incarnation, Mickey Hart of The Grateful Dead on drums. 'Swami' / 'Blow My Mind' was their sole 45. This 10-track collection represents the band's complete recorded output from 1966 and those 10 cuts include first and second versions of several songs, the best of which include the forementioned 'Blow My Mind', 'Gotta Get Away' and 'Far And Away'. Also included is a *bona fide* collectors' item in the shape of the airline promo jingle 'Fly Fly PSA'.

Grahame Bent

THE WOODS
So Long Before Now
★★★★

DOT MATRIX CD/LP

It was by chance that these young musicians met each other in the mid-80s: two girls and two boys, from different parts of the States, all recently transplanted in New York, by then then very much absorbed in matters of noise and no-wave. They were outsiders, their music too uncategorisable to be claimed by any specific crowd: it had shades of C86, sweet jangly psych-pop, harmony-enamoured folk and post-60s hangover sunshine-pop; there was post-punk coming through the windows, too, and a strong DIY feel keeping it all together.

Linda Smith's soon-to-be-cult songwriterly gifts shined through, and so did Steven Cheslik-DeMeyer's cello. A single ('Miracles Tonight', with B-side 'Love Me Again This Summer') was released on Justine Records in '85; the band later sent out demos to general indifference before parting ways in '87. *So Long Before Now* collects all of their recordings, emerging as a lost classic that never was.

Camilla Aisa

LISTEN TO SHINDIG!
ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

waxin' celluloid

THOMAS PATTERSON rounds up Swedish psych, fake folk and the king of rock 'n' roll in this month's soundtrack column

Due to *Shindig!*'s vintage leanings, most soundtracks covered here are reissues and remasters of old material, so it's a treat to open up this month with not only a brand-new soundtrack but one that's an absolute beauty – the soundtrack to recent "it's grim up t'north" folk-horror adjacent BBC costume drama **The Gallows Pole** (★★★★, ROCKET DIGITAL) from those Swedish masters of shamanic neo-psychedelia GOAT. Adapted by Shane Meadows from Benjamin Myers' retelling of the story of the Cragg Vale Coiners, *The Gallows Pole* is one of the best British TV productions in recent memory, its atmosphere made all the more unforgettable thanks to GOAT's rousing, spine-rattling contribution, one that plays equally well divorced from the screen. The physical vinyl edition is out sometime next year, but until then the online version should tide over fans of pagan-infused psych-rock and spooky ominous drones.

Last month's cover star was the one and only quasar of rock 'n' roll, Little Richard (in a feature written by yours truly). Now comes the soundtrack to recent documentary **Little Richard: I Am Everything** (★★★, VARÈSE SARABANDE / CRAFT RECORDINGS CD/LP). A curate's egg, the film featured some wonderful footage of the pompadoured wild man but focused a tad too much on queer theory rather than, you know, the music, whilst cover versions of Little Richard songs from contemporary artists felt more like padding than enlightening re-contextualizations. Those covers, from artists such as Valerie June and Cory Henry, are included, and they remain fairly inconsequential, especially in comparison to the Richard originals on here like 'Lucille' and 'Tutti Frutti'. Really this is one for the completists – if you're a newbie, you're probably best off picking up a *Best Of* instead.

Light In The Attic are crate-diggers *par excellence*, and a highlight of their catalogue is *Dreamin' Wild*, the 1979 private press album recorded by two brothers from rural Washington state, Donnie & Joe Emerson. The brothers' story has now been turned into a movie starring Casey Affleck and Zooey Deschanel, with attendant soundtrack **Dreamin' Wild** (★★★★, LIGHT IN THE ATTIC LP), made up of a few Donnie & Joe originals, reinterpretations of D&J cuts by members of the cast, and some score cues from composer Leopold Ross. It's an interesting melange, one that will appeal mostly to extant fans of the brothers' outsider bedroom pop – although album closer 'When A Dream Is Beautiful' from Donnie and Nancy Sophia Emerson is a gorgeous new ballad that should convert a few neophytes to the cause.

Although not as feted *This Is Spinal Tap*, the 2003 mockumentary **A Mighty Wind** (★★★★, REAL GONE LP) from *Tap*'s Christopher Guest and co was equally well-observed, a delightfully heartfelt send-up of the US folk scene with some pitch perfect parodies of the likes of The Kingston Trio and The New Christy Minstrels. Now repressed on forest green vinyl, *A Mighty Wind: The Album* probably won't make much sense to those who haven't seen the movie or aren't devotees of genteel old school American folk, but if you fall into either of those camps, this is well worth a spin, especially for a jolly romp through the Stones' 'Start Me Up' and the Oscar-nominated ballad 'A Kiss At The End Of The Rainbow'.

When the 1973 French Jean-Paul Belmondo spy spoof **Le Magnifique** (★★★★, LE POP CLUB LP) came out in Anglophone countries, it was retitled either *How To Destroy The Reputation Of The Greatest Secret Agent* or *The Man From Acapulco*, so one would expect the score from prolific jazz man **CLAUDE BOLLING** to be a pastiche of tropes from John Barry/Lalo Schifrin *et al*. Instead, it's a sweeping, weirdly romantic score, balanced out with some Mexican easy-listening, Parisian accordions and overly bouncy comic cues. It's not Bolling's greatest score (which for *Shindig!*'s money is 1970's *Qui?*) but it's worth checking out for mid-tempo *Sound Gallery*-style organ number 'Pop Mod', which is indeed pop but not very mod.

A selection of Italian soundtracks to see us out. From 1969 comes **Sette Mari (Avventura Musicale Nei Mari Del Mondo)** (★★★★, CAM SUGAR LP), a TV soundtrack by composer and actor **UGO CALISE**. Translating to 'Seven Seas' in English, *Sette Mari* is a suitably aquatic-sounding affair, all floaty proto-Broadcast keyboards, ascending harps and sweeping strings augmented with typically cooing vocals from Edda Dell'Orso. A nice treat from the vaults (although we'll overlook the slightly pointless ragtime and calypso numbers that sound shoehorned in).

Edda Dell'Orso crops up again on one of two singles from maestro **PIERO UMILIANI**, **'Angeli Bianchi, Angeli Neri'** (★★★★, FOUR FLIES 45) and **'Il Corpo'** (★★★★, FOUR FLIES 45), both culled from slices of erotica shot by director Luigi Scattini. Dell'Orso lends her vocal talents to the haunting 'Macumba', the flipside of 'Angeli Bianchi', but the killer draw from the 1970 soundtrack is the A-side, the tribalistic 'Saudade', performed by Brazilian singer Maria de Penha Silva. Mystical and arcane, it's unsurprising to learn that the English title of *Angeli* is *Witchcraft '70*. *Il Corpo* from '74, meanwhile, features two cuts, 'Chaser' and 'Hard Times', both possessed of that dreamy soft-funk lounge that infused Euro movies of the era and is rather excellent (although points must be removed for a total lack of Dell'Orso this time around).

Finally, from 1975, we have the soundtrack to Italian crime flick **Roma Drogata: La Polizia Non Puo' Intervenire** (★★★★, SUBSOUND OST LP), from I Pyranas man **ALBERT VERRECCHIA**. Reissued for the first time on vinyl, this is a nice find from the vaults, full of fuzzed-out rock cuts (some sung by Italian personality Sammy Barbot), sleazy blues-funk and a couple of fairly slinky exotica cuts, performed by the storied vocal bands Baba Yaga and Cyan. And best of all – why, if it isn't Edda Dell'Orso again, giving it some gorgeously histrionic moans on a couple of key tracks. Molto bella.

Noah Jupe as Donnie Emerson in *Dreamin'*

reviews now

A multitude of new music

Easy Rider

EMILE
Spirit
★★★★★

HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS CD/LP

Quiet is the new loud, at least as far as stoner-rock label Heavy Psych Sounds is concerned. This new album by Danish/French songwriter Emile Bureau is proof of that. Best known for fronting psych-rock trio The Sonic Dawn, Emile also has a knack for more introspective, folksier acoustic music. His first foray into this softer side was 2020 bilingual solo debut *The Black Spider / Det Kollektive Selvmord*. This English-only follow-up is a confident step up, and features contributions from Sonic Dawn bandmate Jonas Waaben (percussion), Erik Errka Petersson (Hammond), Morten Grønvad (vibraphone) and Rasmus Miehe Sørensen (flute).

Opening track 'Easy Ride' sets the scene and vibe, with lyrical instructions that offer a path towards easy, stress-free living. Emile advises us to commune with nature, pursue dreams, be gentle and kind. Naïve? An overly simple manifesto for these complex modern times? Perhaps. But as the album progresses, these themes and ideas become ever more persuasive. By the time you reach the end you're transported. Just relax and float downstream, as a wise man once said.

Along this soothing journey lie many musical treats, predominately acoustic but with gently lysergic textures and effects here and there. After the twangy spaghetti western guitar on 'Easy Ride''s coda comes 'Nocturnal', where we're promised good times with good people over a bedrock of broody Hammond chords, and John Martyn-esque guitar. 'Elegant Spring' recalls the acoustic stylings of Pentangle, before slowly mutating into bossa nova rhythms, its lyrics calling for rebirth and renewal.

'Heavy Rain' stands as a contrast to the calmness invoked by the bulk of the album. It's a reminder that all is not well in the garden, highlighting concerns about climate change. 'Images' is a balm-like instrumental featuring overdubbed birdsong. Nature is revisited in 'Wilderness', on which Emile sings of stepping off a train at an end-of-the-line station to finding solace and beauty away from civilisation.

Much like Emile's songs for The Sonic Dawn, *Spirit* draws from '60s hippy ideals and calls for increased peace, love and understanding. It's an album seeped in communion and renewal. That all sounds good to me.

Duncan Fletcher

Emile Bureau feels the spirit

APOLLO SUNS
Departures
★★★

DO RIGHT MUSIC LP

Winnipeg collective Apollo Suns plough a neat furrow in expertly played jazz-funk instrumentals that hint at a wide range of influences outside of the traditional realms of funk and soul: Goblin's '70s horror-rock through classic '80s soundtracks and *Overnite Sensation*-era Zappa.

Their first full-length studio outing *Departures* is a frenetic collection that really kicks in with the up-tempo rhythm and winding horns of second track 'Sisyphus' and doesn't let up, save for the downbeat synth-heavy atmospherics of 'Midnight In Winter' and sci-fi romanticism of closer 'Beyond The Woods'. Whilst there's a slickness at play that sometimes threatens to overwhelm the ensemble playing, the sheer energy and willpower oozing from tunes like 'Horses', with its Latin-American groove and wild horns, and the heavy-funk and bombastic rock of 'Fonxy', means there's plenty on offer to entice listeners.

Paul Osborne

BLAINE CAMPBELL & THE CALIFORNIA SOUND
Blaine Campbell & The California Sound
★★★★

SELF-RELEASED LP

"Call me soft, call me sunshine, and file me away," sings Blaine Campbell on 'Summertime In The Sunshine'. Whether that's directed at critics wanting to pigeonhole his music is not made clear; yet there's plenty of soft and sunshine-pop on Blaine's latest LP, along with gentle bossa-nova ('It's Never Enough'), east-meets-west psych ('Rise'), Stones-y rocking ('Runnin' Away') and echoes of *Pet Sounds*-era Beach Boys on 'Come Close To Me'.

But enough categorisation and comparisons. What's unique about Campbell's latest album is the loose concept that holds it all together. The record opens with short spoof TV theme 'The California Sound', inspired by band conversations about the demise of TV show theme music. Each of the following tracks are claimed to summarise episodes of the fictional show. It's a stylistically varied set but strong melodies and an ever-present sense of fun help it gel.

Duncan Fletcher

CELISTIA
Dormida en sus ojos
★★★★

PHILATELIA LP

Having already showcased a nimble way with a melody and a sun-kissed soundscape (check 2021 single 'El Ocaso'), Celistia's debut album picks up from their previous singles and further develops their dreamy, psych-infused pop to wonderful effect across its seven tracks.

It's an accomplished debut that should find favour with fans of contemporary pop-psych and hazy dream-pop exponsents Boogarins, Tame Impala and Beach House. Opener 'Dormida en sus ojos' sees the Catalan sextet expanding their sound with more urgency, bouncing drums and wailing trumpets adding new layers and jazz flavours to the mix. Amongst many highlights are 'Si no fuera por estos momentos', a deliciously wonky slice of psych that opens with electronics and beamed in piano and closes with a beautiful play out that winds its way skywards, and 'Libro en blanco', a brilliantly hazy soundscape recalling the sound of early Verve if they'd hung out in the Mediterranean sunshine rather than rainy Wigan.

Paul Osborne

CUT WORMS
Cut Worms
★★★★

JAGJAGUWAR CD/LP

Ohio-born, Brooklyn-based Max Clarke makes music that draws from Brill Building jukebox pop, country, early Beatles and doo-wop. Somehow, he manages to blend and re-present these influences in fresh contemporary forms. The third album released under his Cut Worms *nom de plume* is the first he's self-produced and mixed. It was recorded with his live band and features pals Brian and Michael from The Lemon Twigs on a couple of tracks.

It's a concise, focused record, especially when compared to 2020's preceding double LP *Nobody Lives Here Anymore*. Clarke's knack for melody shines through on soft-pop gems 'Ballad Of The Texas King' and 'Too Bad', but it's the constant themes of innocence and vulnerability that are the album's hidden power, not least on 'Living Inside', an account of back-to-school sadness. If you admire mavericks who mine similar seams (think Jonathan Richman or Alex Chilton) then you'll find this to your liking.

Duncan Fletcher

DAISY DELL
Daisy Dell
★★★

LOLLIPOP LP

These guys and gal may not quite reach the heights of the Airplane and the Dead, but there's something of the Big Brother and Joy Of Cooking about them, largely due to that soulful femme edge.

Daisy Dell emanate from the same label and scene that brought us Maston, Mystic Braves and Triptides, and also pay close attention to the source material. Julie Batterman (of Julie & The Rollerz) has a strong, able, voice that captures the phrasing and feel of those legendary '60s bandleaders. The lads, notably the blistering guitar of Noel Rico, prove more than solid support. Throw in some horns and organ, and you arrive at a garage-flavoured, bluesy set of nine cool songs that wouldn't have sounded at all out of place in any late '60s Californian ballroom. Judging from this effort they're an act to watch.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

CRAIG EDMONDS
On The Common
★★★★

BANDCAMP LP

That fact you're reading this magazine indicates you're likely to be a fan of sunshine-pop, Laurel Canyon folk, and both genres' inherent traits: harmony, counterpoint, big sentiment and strong melody – all the good stuff. In which case you'll enjoy this second full-length album by Mitcham-based Craig Edmonds.

It follows 2020's eponymous debut and is full of 12-string guitar chime and self-harmonised vocals. It's easy on the ear, occasionally forlorn and melancholic, and highly enjoyable. Edmonds' take on his favoured genres is filtered through a distinctly south London lens. Lyrics may reference specific places from his locale ('Suite Mitcham Common', 'Clouds Over Croydon') or evoke a place where the boundaries between urban areas and the natural world are blurred. Foxes and fish are glimpsed, birds spotted, and flowers bloom in unlikely places. An album of quiet observations, one attuned to the changing of seasons, and their accompanying emotional shifts.

Duncan Fletcher

THE FLASHCUBES
Pop Masters
★★★★

BIG STIR CD

Syracuse's Flashcubes started their career in 1977 with a cover song, opening their first ever gig with The Beatles' 'Hold Me Tight', and have had a penchant for playing OPs ever since, recently releasing a brace of singles in collaboration with the original artists. Those 45s, plus some new covers, comprise this long-player.

The band never strays far from the source material but score brownie points for top notch choices such as 'Nothing To Do' from Sparks' universally ignored *Big Beat* album, latter day Pilot single 'Get Up And Go' (with David Paton himself on piano and vocals), a flawless 'Alone In My Room' from Dwight Twilley's hard to find solo debut, and 'Get The Message', an Eric Carmen belter by his pre-Raspberries band Cyrus Erie. Add in covers of The Posies, The Paleys, and more, and this is both a great powerpop primer and sly introduction to all the acts homaged.

Peter Gallagher

HOLY HIVE
Big Crown Vaults Vol 3
★★★★

BIG CROWN LP

As their second album was unleashed onto the world two years ago, Holy Hive were already in the process of parting ways. The good people at Big Crown are now diving into their rich vaults and gathering unreleased recordings and deep cuts from the group's short-lived but fertile adventure.

There is their signature falsetto-blessed retro soul, and cinematic pieces that look back at '70s soundtracks while retaining a thoroughly contemporary production finesse ('Green Milk'). Pastoral highlight 'The Shame' features Leon Michels on flute and Fleet Foxes' Robin Pecknold on bass, while 'Celeste' is caught somewhere between baroque incantation and dream-pop. 'Red Is The Rose' is unadulterated folk grace. For a post-break-up compilation, it's quite exceptional: as diverse as the tracklist gets, this does feel like a proper album. Ignore what you know about its genesis and you'll call it Holy Hive's most adventurous and soothing record.

Camilla Aisa

LOUISE LE HIR
Tiny Golden Pins
★★★

AQUAMARINE DIGITAL

Le Hir's third album is a bi-lingual collection of "Cosmic American French Dream Pop" that ticks all the boxes from jangly Byrdsian country rock to authentic Hardy- and Gall-inspired yé-yé perkiness. 'Give It' shuffles along to a snappy hootenanny beat and 'Poisson', a punkier remake of an earlier single combines a ferocious garage edge with an '80's' powerpop groove that's sure to crowd the dance floors.

Girl group harmonies and a reflective keyboard solo shimmer throughout 'Shoo' and should earmark this for radio stations specialising in ear-friendly '60s nostalgia. The martial beat and Le Hir's no-nonsense vocal on 'Bella' hint at a renegade country bad girl streak lurking under her demure exterior (think Dolly Parton with an axe to grind) and the giddy 'Les Chausseures de Maman' is pure *yé-yé* gold that had me prancing around the room singing along to its infectious "sha-la-la-la-la" chorus.

Jeff Penczak

MADDIE MAE
Wildflower
★★★★

ELEFANT DIGITAL

Following three singles dating back to 2020, anticipation was high for the ex-Yearning singer's debut solo album and, under the continued guidance of mentor Joe Moore, Mae doesn't disappoint. There's no avoiding the Taylor Swift comparisons once the singles 'Baby You're An Angel' and 'Stay The Same' slink out of your speakers but Mae's soothing vocals and the backing harmonies over funky pop dance beats win you over.

The soulful electro-pop of 'Black Liquorice' suggests a Beyoncé influence, and current single 'Polaroid Love' successfully navigates a downtempo vibe with hints of Hope Sandoval. Mae's obviously been surveying the current pop landscape and she dips into several current chart-friendly styles that should win a new audience tired of their Lorde and Eilish albums. I miss some of The Yearning's nostalgic '60s girl group arrangements, but mature melancholic confessionals like 'Used To' prove Mae has fulfilled her earlier promise and continues to be a talent to watch.

Jeff Penczak

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

Holy Hive, sweet as honey

IRAINA MANCINI
Undo The Blue
★★★★

NEEDLE MYTHOLOGY CD/LP

Here's a rocking new album from a not-so-new kid on the block. Perfectly amalgamating disco, psych, pop and rock, Iraina Mancini has fashioned a playfully radical first album with *Undo The Blue*.

From the opener, 'Deep End' to the concluding 'Take A Bow', Mancini keeps the focused, though eclectic beat. Her range of (predominantly '70s) influences are heard in every twinkling tambourine and dusty trumpet. Listening to the album is a bit like watching Jeanne Moreau jump into the water in *Jules And Jim*, like witnessing a giddy freefall. Mancini isn't running on impulse, though; *Undo The Blue* is the culmination of years spent devouring music. With a weekly Soho Radio slot and a busy deejay schedule, Mancini devotes herself to the sounds that she loves. She told *Shindig!* recently that she wanted to close the album on a "big, cinematic song", and she got just what she wanted. 'Take A Bow' is a sweeping triumph, sure to undo any blue.

Tess Carges

DANIEL ÖGREN
Fastingen-92
★★★★

MR BONGO CD/LP

Swedish composer/musician/producer Daniel Ögren thrives on being unclassifiable and is masterful when it comes to juxtaposing moods and genres. That much is evident on *Fastingen-92*, an album originally released by Sing A Song Fighter Records in 2020, which is now receiving a wider release with an additional track on Mr Bongo. It's a record that takes inspiration from Nordic folk music, soundtracks, chilled-out electronica, cinematic-soul, jazz, and even Cantopop.

Opening instrumental 'Annalena' will lure you in with whimsy, though its quirky melody is something of a side-step. When Ögren decides to go for deep emotion or euphoria, the contrast against the album's more light-hearted moments becomes even more affecting. Take 'Idag', which features a bewitching guest vocal from Anna Ahnlund, or 'Picasso' which simultaneously evokes misty Scandinavian fjords and scorched Andalucian landscapes. Ögren's desire to be unclassifiable may work against him in commercial terms, but artistically he's admirably fearless.

Duncan Fletcher

PAPER SPARROWS
Hiding Away From The Light
★★★★

FOLKSVILLE CD/LP

With their well-received debut EP *Silver* and a brace of complimentary live dates completed across Britain earlier this year, Edinburgh troubadours Paper Sparrows arrive with their long-awaited first album.

Concise and well-structured, *Hiding Away From The Light* offers up 10 confident and assured original compositions. Overall, the album is a pleasant traipse through the trio's current repertoire, most, if not all of it, reflecting their collective influences; the majority being found within the realms of folk and folk-rock. Openers 'Saving Grace' and 'Tears Like Silver' display a degree of lyrical soul-searching and, as the album unfolds, the instrumentation widens to include bouzouki, mandolin, shruti (played by stand-up bassist Colin Morris) and keening electric guitar. The bouncy title track is the most commercial selection, with a slight Proclaimers feel. In contrast, 'Down To The Riverside' is maudlin late night bedsitter fayre, with regular lead vocalist David Hershaw trading places with Ross Fairbairn.

Lenny Helsing

VINNY PECULIAR
How I Learned To Love The Freaks
★★★★

SHADRACK & DUXBURY CD/LP

Peculiar's 13th solo album is both a love letter and a belated apology to the '60s/70s hippy dream. Opening with 'Death Of The Counterculture', an elegiac list of those we've lost over the years – ideas and ideals as well as people – the sound is appropriately psychedelic, albeit channelled via the big-drums '80s, and Peculiar's deadpan, half-spoken delivery contrasts nicely with the squealing guitars and chanted Oms.

Mixing irony and sincerity, 'Going To San Francisco's' amped-up talking blues is more Dr & The Medics than Dylan, while 'Peace And Love' recalls Robyn Hitchcock, and the yob-glam riffing of 'Hippy Kids' evokes the moment when a new generation blew a big raspberry in their older brothers and sisters' patchouli-scented direction. The movement's flaws, like the guru games of find-yourself and I-can-fix-it on 'Ashram Curtains' are unsparingly dissected, but the closing 'Flower Power' hopes that maybe the era's best impulses aren't gone forever.

Ben Graham

ANDREW RUMSEY
Evensongs
★★★★

GARE DU NORD CD/LP

Since 2019, The Right Reverend Dr Andrew Rumsey has been Bishop of Ramsbury, responsible for the archdeaconries of Sarum and Wiltshire in The Diocese Of Salisbury. *Evensongs,* recorded live on a single summer's day in a 12th century church, accompanies his 2021 book *English Grounds: A Pastoral Journal,* but it's also an entrancing, enchanting album in its own right.

Besides being a fine folk guitarist, 55-year-old Rumsey has a natural, unrestrained but unaffected voice, and the economy and wordcraft of a practised poet. There's a cheeky thrill in hearing the bish admit to being "secretly stoned by the A4" on the opening 'Silbury Hill', a plaintive meditation on landscape, but *Evensongs* is a serious, considered work with a pleasingly light touch. The melancholy 'Virginia Ash' evokes Julian Cope at his most wide-eyed and folky, while 'The Old Boys' appropriately reflects on a generation reaching the evening of their days. Recommended.

Ben Graham

SAY SHE SHE
Silver
★★★★★

COLEMINE CD/2-LP

Finally, a new band with their gaze fixed firmly ahead. Say She She's second album *Silver* is an infectious, groove-packed delight. The band, led by three classically trained female vocalists, is one of the best around right now. With mellifluous harmonies from Piya Malik, Sabrina Mileo Cunningham and Nya Gazelle Brown, Say She She arpeggiates, bounces and bruises.

Trapezing across soul, funk, disco, and psychedelia, the 16-track kaleidoscope is a labour of love. Strictly cosmopolitan, *Silver* knows no borders and accommodates no restrictions. The album, though bouncing and dance-inspired, is fuelled by rage and ignited by the political battles of our time. On

Continues over

Interstellar Mind Trips

DREAM DIVISION
Lumarian
LIBRARY OF THE OCCULT LP

HIDDEN HORSE
Incorporeal
HOLUZAM LP

TENGGER
Tengger
WE ARE BUSY BODIES LP

ALL ★★★★

Experimental electronica from the '80s is having a bit of a renaissance. This is reflected not only by reissue campaigns but, most interestingly, in new retro-futuristic releases. The cosmic synthesised sounds of the decade are evoked on both *Lumarian* by Dream Division (a *nom de plume electronique* for Library Of The Occult head honcho Tom McDowell) and *Incorporeal*, the second album from Hidden Horse (a side project for Beautify Junkyards members João Kyron and Tony Watts). But that's where the similarities between the two records end. Their different nature is exemplified in the titles they give their tracks; on Lumarian titles are succinct and show a flair for evocative vastness and myth-building ('Crystal City', 'Lost Kingdom'). It's music made for interstellar mind trips, where even the darker corners of the cosmos make for eye-catching mirages (the title track is an epic number that wouldn't feel out of place soundtracking a climactic scene in the latest season of *Stranger Things*). Far from sci-fi reveries and from the kaleidoscopic psych-folk of Beautify Junkyards, Hidden Horse construct sheet-metal soundscapes that contemplate disintegration and insinuate the consciousness from within; their titles are particularised and reflective ('Living With The Leftovers Of Past Decades', 'A Mirror That Refuses To Confirm Existence'), the songs explore the dystopian, minimal side of retro-futurism. Equally steeped in the forward-thinking visions of the past, *Lumarian* and *Incorporeal* are compelling parallel lines – both will probably sound different with each new visit.

Firmly out of time is where our third title likes to live. Tengger is a Seoul-based travelling musical couple (accompanied on stage by their young son) whose Mongolian name rather fittingly means "ultimate expanded sky". Singular purveyors of ethereal electronic spells that see-saw between new-age and vaporous psychedelia, on album number 13 they're at their abstract apex. Synths are accompanied by Indian harmonium, and years of itinerant communion translate into a sound that, at this point, feels enchantingly incorporeal. "If you are looking for something, something is also looking for us," celestial single 'Panaptu' offers gently; Tengger's music is indeed a perfect backdrop for deep looking.

Camilla Aisa

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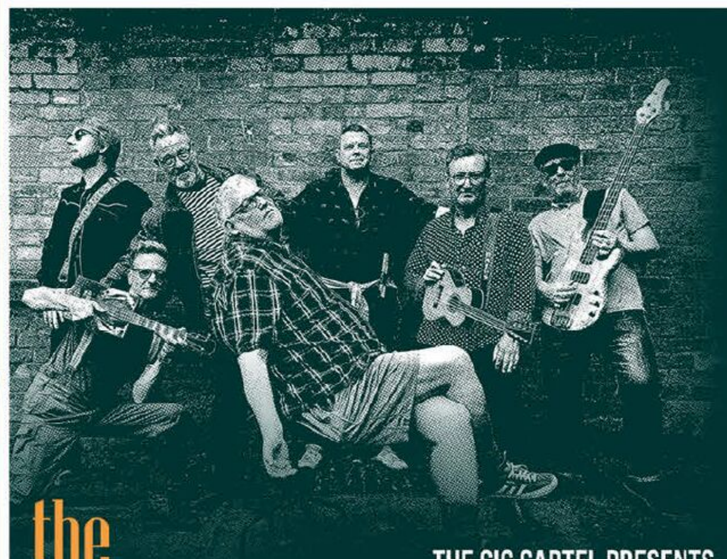

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GLOUCESTER - GUILDHALL

'NORMA' the band decries the overturning of Roe V Wade, chanting, "We will not go back! Write a letter to the state!" Uneasy with the status quo, Say She She offer up a second great album and raise the bar even higher for contemporary artists looking to make a joyful noise.

Tess Carges

SCOTT HEPPLE & THE SUN BAND
Ashes To Wildflowers
★★★★

BANDCAMP DIGITAL

This listener can't tell if Scott Hepple & The Sun Band remind me of the musicians that populated Laurel Canyon in the '60s and '70s, or if they remind me of those 21st century bands that so expertly recalled their Laurel Canyon forebears.

'Letting Go', for example, is *American Stars 'n' Bars*-era Neil Young, but 'Caligula' is Ty Segall masquerading as Neil (both are admitted influences). Elsewhere, 'Nobody Else (Is Gonna Do It For You)' is so joyful it could have escaped from a Polyphonic Spree record, probably *The Fragile Army*, and 'Wildfires' could be a *Van Occupanther*-era Midlake out-take if it wasn't so damn exuberant. None of this is criticism; I loved the above-named records and acts, and I love this. I'm also particularly fond of the subtle English pastoral psychedelia that pervades all this California leaning. *Ashes To Wildflowers* is an absolute blast, and an outstanding debut from the young Newcastle quartet.

Peter Gallagher

SOFT SCIENCE
Lines
★★★★

SPINOUT NUGGETS / SHELFLIFE CD/LP

The California septet returns with its fourth album (and third containing all single-word titles) of bubbly dream-pop, buoyed by cascading electronics, glistening guitars, and the soft male-female harmonies initially exhibited in previous bands like Holiday Flyer and California Oranges.

Bookended by thousand-yard sunset-staring instrumentals 'Low' and 'Polar', the album jumpstarts into action with 'Grip' which harkens back to Lush's perky Britpop attack. Singles 'Sadness' and 'Kerosene' should win new converts to the brilliant floating pop sensibilities that will enthrall fans of Saint Etienne and the Sarah roster. The jingle jangle jolliness of 'Stuck' and confectionary overload 'Zeros' highlight Soft Science's upbeat, sunny outlook with a melancholic tinge, but that toasted marshmallow afterglow from the sensational synthpop stomper 'True' seals the deal on the perfect pop package.

Jeff Penczak

TOBIN SPROUT
Demos And Outtakes II
★★★★

PERSONA NON GRATA CD/LP

On this second volume of collected demos, alternate takes and unreleased live recordings, Guided By Voices founding member Tobin Sprout looks back at the entirety of his career.

There's a jangly demo of 'Carnival Boy' (his 1996 solo debut's titular track) and a live rendition of 'The Man I Used to Know', centrepiece of his most recent album, the excellent Neil Young-tinged *Empty Horses*. There's even a stunning piano version of '14 Cheerleader Coldfront', one of the impossibly prolific Guided By Voices' finest early songs, which made its debut on '92 classic *Propeller*. Another GBV fave, 'Atom Eyes', also makes an intimate apparition here, the combination of piano and warm-hearted vocals bringing to mind Emitt Rhodes. Sprout has always been the Harrison to Robert Pollard's simultaneous Lennon and McCartney – this fascinating sonic scrapbook is a testament to his own decades-spanning gift for melody, which deserves just as much recognition.

Camilla Aisa

THE SUMMERTIMES
The Summertimes
★★★★

BANDCAMP DIGITAL

The Summertimes are Australian songwriters David Beniuk and David Challenger, aided and abetted by studio veterans including Steve Bull (Icehouse) and Ashley Naylor (Even).

With a moniker like theirs we're expecting generous helpings of sun-drenched jangle, and that's exactly what you get once past the British Beat Boom of opener 'Inside'. 'Password' is an instant powerpop classic, as is 'Where The Light Hits The Square', which, unusually for the genre, throws in some classy brass embellishments. In fact, with hints of fellow antipodeans Crowded House, The Go-Betweens and The Hoodoo Gurus, not to mention Blue Ash, Teenage Fanclub and REM (on a song called 'Athens, GA' no less, every bit as shiny as it is happy), all tracks are guitar pop gold. If *The Summertimes* was 50 years old it would be hailed as a classic; save yourself the wait and get it now.

Peter Gallagher

THE SURFIN' LUNGS
Last Wave To Surfsville
★★★★

REDONDO CD

We've had to bide our time for the surf punk-pop veterans' follow-up to *Surf Factor 8*, but the seven-year wait has been concluded with the release of their ninth studio album, and it's jam-packed with the summertime fare that the Lungs (now down to a trio) have been joyfully crowing about for over 40 years.

'Beach Patrol' kicks things off with a typically rollocking start, with trademark driving guitars, harmonies and Chris Pearce's breezy lead vocals. Pearce has been there since the band's formation in 1981 and it's his familiar voice that can be heard throughout, powering through other upbeat numbers such as 'Boardrider', 'She Knows Jack', 'The Boys Dig Her The Most', 'Bump That!' and the closing 'A Summer To Remember'. Drummer Ray Webb gets his first lead vocal on the ballad 'Jacqueline', while Clive Gilling threatens to steal the show with the delightful 'San Diego Dreaming'. Instrumentals come in the guise of bass-heavy 'Date With Danger' and 'Z-Cars'.

Dom Picksley

Scott Hepple & The Sun Band, rising from the ashes

TECHNICOLOR NOIR
Technicolor Noir
★★★★

DANGERHOUSE SKYLAB LP

A Parisian group that draws on many years' experience, with active service in such groups as The Tribe, Bang and Scope, as well as a newer recruitment from Russia's Karova's Milkshake. They all play a bit of a blinder on this, the group's eponymous debut.

Facile as it may sound, many elements will doubtless have some listeners racking their minds as to which Who, Small Faces, Beatles or Monkees track it is that's playing. The fuzz and wah-wah guitars, bass, vocals, plus production flourishes heard across these dozen tracks are authentic recreations of '60s garage, psych, folk-rock and pop. Perhaps only the less resonant sound of the drums, and the mish-mash of stylings – sometimes coyly naïve, arrogant and tongue-in-cheek – reveal that this is a real live current group. *Technicolor Noir* is a strong debut for sure, with many cool songs and hip and happening sounds within its grooves, including 'Dreaming, Little Mademoiselle Swinging' and woozy, two-part scene-setter 'Look At The Sun'.

Lenny Helsing

TEENAGE FANCLUB
Nothing Lasts Forever
★★★★

PEMA/MERGE CD/LP

"For a while there I was blue," Teenage Fanclub admit on 'Back To The Light', a song that opens with breezy strumming reminiscent of *Songs From Northern Britain* opener 'Start Again' and feels like a mission statement for the band's current phase. When *Endless Arcade* came out in 2021, they were writing about divorce and adjusting to a new line-up following founding member Gerard Love's departure. They were singing 'The Sun Won't Shine on Me'. Two years later, their songs have found the sun again (or is it the other way around?).

Nothing Lasts Forever is in fact overtly luminous: 'I Left A Light On' is followed by 'See The Light', 'Falling Into The Sun' basks in near-dream- pop glow. It's the sound of a band that has weathered many storms – hopefulness goes hand in hand with patience, placidity is a hard-won achievement. The result is an album of pristine late summer melodic warmth.

Camilla Aisa

UNCLE ACID & THE DEADBEATS
Slaughter On First Avenue
★★★★

RISE ABOVE CD/2-LP

Five years since their last studio LP, the bubblegum Black Sabbath returns with a mammoth live album recorded over two nights in Minneapolis, three years apart, in 2019 and 2022. Like the best Frankenstein's Monsters, however, you can't see the join.

A deadpan intro that's a pastiche of Hawkwind's 'Sonic Attack' with more self-deprecating irony warns "it will all sound the same" but that's only partly true. Sure, bludgeoning repetition and relentless fuzz riffs are kind of the point, but there are still differences between the vintage heaviness of melodic grebo dirges like 'Death's Door' and 'Thirteen Candles', and more recent NWOBHM-influenced rockers like 'Shockwave City' and 'Blood Runner', or indeed, the 12-minute 'Slow Death', an uncharacteristically gentle ballad bisected by a long bluesy solo that shows Uncle Acid can do soulful and sensitive too. Existing fans will snap this up, but it's an ideal first trip for newbies too.

Ben Graham

VARIOUS ARTISTS
JEM Records Celebrates Ray Davies
★★★

JEM CD/LP

After giving John Lennon, Brian Wilson and Pete Townsend the tribute treatment in the past three consecutive Augusts, JEM Records and its roster of artists now shine the spotlight on the songs of head Kink Ray Davies.

There are plenty of plus points here, not least the undisputed quality of the songwriting, and the calibre of the performances; *Shindig!* has praised recent releases by The Grip Weeds, Midnight Callers and Anderson Council amongst others. Furthermore, this platter presents a good cross-section from Davies's *oeuvre*, with a smattering of hits ('Lola', See My Friends') balanced by deep cuts such as 1964 B-side 'I Gotta Move'. Top tracks are those that dare to be different, with the Midnight Callers' glammed-up 'Come Dancing' and a trippy 'Days' by Lisa Mychols & Super 8 leading the charge. The downside is that too many of the covers are just too faithful. If that doesn't bother you, feel free to add another star.

Peter Gallagher

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Prairie Biscuits
★★★★★

TORN & FRAYED CASSETTE

Combine the pleasure of blowing the dust off overlooked deep cuts from the far sun-kissed corners of the '60s and '70s with the absolute delight that is finding young artists breathing new life into beloved old sounds. A recipe for total bliss.

It only takes a bite of Torn & Frayed's *Prairie Biscuits* compilation to start smiling and, why not, feeling more at peace with the world. We open the jar to find cult faves from the golden age of country-rock and mellow folk, reimagined for the occasion by players of today who have a distinct gift for those perpetually heart-warming sounds. There are plenty of names you've read about in these pages (Spencer Cullum, Sam Burton, Doug Tuttle, Pearl Charles and Michael Rault re-imagining Chris Darrows' 'Shawnee Moon' as a pedal steel-shrouded, Joni-enamoured duet). Think of your ultimate summer comfort food. Whatever it might be, this is that in musical form.

Camilla Aisa

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Tell Everybody! (21st Century Juke Joint Blues)
★★★

EASY EYE SOUND CD/LP

Dan Auerbach continues to both shine a spotlight on unsung modern blues voices and challenge preconceived stereotypes via his Easy Eye Sound label. "Woke up this morning, my dog was dead" caricatures need not apply.

Opener 'Coal Black Mattie' by RL Boyce grooves along as happily as The Black Keys' version did a few years back, Robert Finlay's slinky, soulful title track keep the party going, and 'Daughter Of Zion' see the late Glenn Schwartz joins forces with his James Gang successor Joe Walsh and Auerbach for a jam that serves up dollops of Cream. Meanwhile, Auerbach's own 'Every Chance I Get (I Want You In The Flesh)' ensures the circle between Tommy Johnson's 'Big Road Blues', Canned Heat's 'On The Road Again' and Norman Greenbaum's 'Spirit In The Sky' remains unbroken. These *21st Century Juke Joint Blues* are unmistakably bluesy, but there's a lot of rock, pop and soul in here too.

Peter Gallagher

MARK WILLIAMS
Belief
★★★★

BANDCAMP

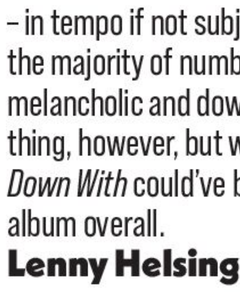
Mark Williams has been discretely floating around the Liverpool music scene since the early '90s. But his Britpoppy bands Autumn Tone and Whirlpool studiously swerved significant attention, so he eventually gave music the heave-ho and became a journalist instead. Shame, because there was obviously a prodigious talent in waiting.

Belief is the debut of a man whose name should rank alongside many celebrated songwriters of his generation, such as Lee Mavers and even Paul Weller. Comprising a 50/50 ratio of re-recorded tracks 30 or more years old and new material, the set bounces into life with 'Everything To Me', a jangly powerpop gem, and stays pleasingly Fabs-like throughout. The album's slowest song is also its most touching. 'How Soon Love Dies', a swoonsome ballad that Neil Finn or Glenn Tilbrook would happily call their own, reveals a knack for plucking timeless melodies from the air. All this and multi-instrumentalist Williams is a Jellyfish fan too!

Chris Twomey

THE WRONG SOCIETY
Down With
★★★

SCREAMING APPLE LP



Hamburg-area garage punk ne'er-do-wells The Wrong Society have been in the business of putting out top class singles for the last decade or so on a raft of different labels, but *Down With* marks the group's first foray into the realms of the long-player.

The four-piece, led by guitarist/vocalist Kai Becker, mostly write their own songs, the best of which include such critical and observant appraisals as 'She's In Love With Herself', 'Heart Of Stone' and 'Don't Waste My Time'. They also cover '60s US teen punk obscuro 'Those Little Things' by The Knight Riders and a slightly more modern tale of caution in 'Stay Away' by malcontent soloist Paul Messis. Although there are some numbers which are upbeat – in tempo if not subject matter and tone – the majority of numbers are woeful, moody, melancholic and downbeat. This isn't a bad thing, however, but with more variation *Down With* could've been a much stronger album overall.

Lenny Helsing

SVEN WUNDER
Late Again
★★★★

PIANO PIANO LP

The work rate of jazz-funk-soul-library ace Sven Wunder is something to behold, with three albums and a plethora of singles released in as many years. But this disarming level of productivity has done nothing to mute the creativity and joy that Wunder brings to every release, as he consistently navigates discrete musical paths. And his latest outing *Late Again* sees the Swedish musician in nocturnal, dim-the-lights mode as he weaves a laidback groove of low-tempo jazz, soul and easy-listening.

The music here, however, is not wholly new. Instead, *Late Again* brings together earlier recordings and brand-new tunes to create an ambience of white picket fence whimsy with an urban underbelly. Transcendent flute reigns supreme on older tracks including 'Snowdrops' and the gloriously bucolic 'Stars Align', all of which sit perfectly alongside the new easy-going acid jazz-funk of 'Sundown' and Percy Faith-leaning 'Take A Break'. Gorgeous.

Sarah Gregory

BEE BEE SEA
Time And Time / Memories Of Another Life
★★★

WILD HONEY

Italian garage-psych merchants Bee Bee Sea confound expectations with the A-side of their new single, built on and inspired by the short quotation, "Only time can write a song that's really real" from the Richard Hell & The Voidoids song 'Time'.

Less frantic than some of their earlier work, a simple, drifting chord progression opens out when the sweeping, flowing vocals cut in – the momentum being only briefly interrupted by a short, dreamy, catchy chorus. The band's '60s and '70s influences are clear but there is also a whiff of '90s indie in the mix. 'Memories Of Another Life' is a more forceful affair altogether as the thumping, dynamic rhythm section of Giacomo Parisio on bass and Andrea Onofrio on drums support the treble-edged overdriven guitar work and vocals of frontman Wilson Wilson. There's a forcefully anthemic chorus and an admirably understated guitar solo as the sound builds to a suitably abrupt conclusion.

Henry Hutton

THE BLUE FLAMES
The Blue Flames EP
★★★

BGP

Back in *Shindig!* #51 Georgie Fame revealed the influence of the nascent west London ska and bluebeat scenes on his fledgling career, when The Blue Flames would play local dances for a largely West Indian audience deejayed by the legendary Count Suckle who "was on the scene long before the mods arrived in Carnaby Street".

This was 1963, two years prior to chart success and without his moniker preceding the group's name. The band cut two singles for Rita and Benny Izon's R&B label, and these comprise the four tracks on this EP, housed in authentic looking cover art. All instrumentals, each of the four betrays Caribbean roots: 'Orange Street' is an obvious nod to Kingston, Jamaica; 'Stop Right Here' has a Calypso vibe; 'JA Blues' is the pick of the bunch in full Booker T mode. Mr Powell went on to better things, but this is nonetheless worth a listen.

Vic Templar

LISTEN TO THE
SHINDIG!
BROADCAST
ON MIXCLOUD

THE BUDOS BAND
Frontier's Edge EP
★★★★

DIAMOND WEST

What better way to launch your new label than a perfectly hot slab of vinyl that leaves listeners wanting for more? After amicably parting ways with Daptone, The Budos Band are doing it for themselves. Quite expertly so, one should add.

Written over two days, these six tracks brim with massive soul-funk grooves, blaxploitation swagger and, don't you forget it, a rock 'n' roll heart. Hair-raising from start to finish and better savoured as a whole, *Frontier's Edge* is all driving horns, thick bass, heavy breaks and melting guitars – with the occasional sci-fi synth sprinkled on top for good measure. 'Crescent Blade' could easily pass for a crate-digger's favourite from the '70s, sampled again and again over the following decades. Then again, it's hard to pick a favourite. And if the second track proclaims that 'Devil Doesn't Dance', it's just because he's probably lost in the groove.

Camilla Aisa

LISA BEAT AND THE LIARS
Sheena Is A Beat Rocker / Italian Sun / Little Latin Lupe Lu
★★★★

CHAPUTA!

Formed originally in 2016 under the moniker Lisa Beat e i Bugiardi, this band is now operating under the name Lisa Beat & The Liars as they seek to widen their appeal with new releases recorded in English rather than their native Italian.

Kicking off with a Merseybeat tribute to The Ramones, slight tweaks to the lyrics and the addition of a guitar solo give us 'Sheena Is A Beat Rocker', a satisfying slice of affectionate beat twang. In the same vein, Joe Jones' 'California Sun, best known in its version by The Rivieras, is transformed into the equally enjoyable 'Italian Sun' with similar lyrical sleights of hand. Completing this trilogy of adaptions is a straight-forward working of the Bill Medley-composed bar band favourite 'Little Latin Lupe Lu'.

Overall, the group comes up trumps on all three tracks by not trying to overcomplicate songs that were already close to perfection.

Henry Hutton

Original sinners
The New Eves

THE MARK THREE
Shining Bright EP
★★★

FAB

Made up of personnel from groups such as The Risk, Sacred Hearts, Deep Six, Yeh-Yeh and Omega Tribe, this is the latest recording from English group The Mark Three. Unsurprisingly, they're a trio that features in its ranks bassist/vocalist Mark Le Gallez (former head honcho of Twist Records), guitarist/vocalist Paul Hooper-Keeley (previously responsible for the Biff Bang Pow label) and drummer/multi-instrumentalist Emma Page.

The sound throughout the five cuts isn't too dissimilar to some of those late '80s/early '90s indie-mod aggregations who could be found plying their wares on seven-inch flexi discs nestled within the pages of *Woosh!* And *Sha-la-la* fanzines. Further evidence of this can be heard on adequate, if copycat versions of The Eyes' Who-infatuated 'I'm Rowed Out' and Fire's perennial mod-psych wig-out 'Father's Name Is Dad'. The group's own compositions, suitably punkier, are presented in an upbeat, stylish way. Expect more soon from their debut long-player *Paisley Paradise*.

Lenny Helsing

THE NEW EVES
Original Sin / Mother
★★★★

BROADSIDE HACKS DIGITAL

When looking for new, exciting talents we can always count on Brighton. Enter The New Eves, a four-piece capable of packing so much in the short space of two songs to leave you wondering where they'll land next. It's impossible to tell, and that is perfectly intriguing.

They describe 'Original Sin' as "The song Eve would have written if she had an electric guitar." It turns out Eve would be closely related to The Raincoats (the violin, the vocals, the raw world-building in musical form) and would gladly get along with Sleater-Kinney circa the turn of the millennium too. On the other hand, the flute-led 'Mother' is rooted in Albion folk, but it turns its harmonious flair into something eerie and haunting. Picture, if you will, The Staves soundtracking *Valerie And Her Week Of Wonders*. Similarly, the cover portrait is very *Picnic At Hanging Rock*...with an extra layer of uncanny, of course.

Camilla Aisa

NOVAK'S KAPELLE
Hypodermic Needle / Doing That Rhythm Thing
★★★★

BACHELOR ARCHIVES

This 1968 reinterpretation of hard-hitting beat cruncher 'Inside Looking Out' – originally cut by The Animals for Decca a couple of years earlier – marks the commercial debut of highly regarded Vienna-based aggregation Novak's Kapelle. Led by charismatic drummer Erwin Novak, 'Hypodermic Needle' and the similarly enthralling 'Doing That Rhythm Thing' (also with Animals reference) count as early pinnacles of this group's scattershot career.

Paul Braunsteiner does a brilliant job in heavying up the song's initial guitar riffs, and with Novak's quirkily arresting drum

kit embellishments and suitably out-there proto-punk vocals, the group creates something entirely of their own making. Novices should also check out the group's outrageous February '69 appearance of 'Hypodermic' on Austria's *Countdown* television programme online. With original Amadeo label copies very thin on the ground, Bachelor Archives has done a magnificent job in making this tremendous slice of psychedelic/progressive beat available to modern record lovers at an affordable price.

Lenny Helsing

PAPERNUT CAMBRIDGE

Cinderella Crazy Golf EP

★★★★

GARE DU NORD

Papernut Cambridge and their rolling bubblegum psych-pop have been loitering in the indie undergrowth for almost 15 years. The baby of Death In Vegas/Thrashing Doves guitarist Ian Button, the band is typically Albion in its melodious songwriting while tapping into the harmonious psych of LA's Paisley Underground.

With this year's long-player *Channel Suite* not long on the shelves, Button has already moved onto his next project, the story of two "elderly psychedelicians" who, despite their contented dotage, are facing the deleterious downsides of growing old. Flying solo on this occasion, *Cinderella Crazy Golf* features four tracks of refined dream-pop that channels

The Rain Parade and C86 hitters The Orchids with a tinge of garage rawness. Released on Gare du Nord – the label that Button co-owns with musical companion Robert Rotifer – the single is limited to just 100 copies with some rather appealing postcards. Get in quick, it's worth it.

Sarah Gregory

REFLECTIVE DETECTIVES

Unknown Suite EP

★★★★

BANDCAMP

When Reflective Detectives' last long-player *Total Fiction* was released back in 2019 it received plenty of plaudits. But the pandemic hiatus saw only one single emerge from the LA-based psych-rockers' camp. That is until now, as Ryan Gabrinetti and his cohorts return with EP and psych-rock voyage *Unknown Suite*.

To all intents and purposes, Gabrinetti *is* Reflective Detectives – essentially handling all writing and playing duties. But on *Unknown Suite* he's thrown his usual go-tos out of the window. While still very much a psych-rock production with sweeping fuzz guitars, pounding percussion and driving keys, the traditional battery of songs has been substituted for one single musical

Continues over

tracks

CAMILLA AISA rounds up this month's digital downloads and stray oddities

Welcome back to *Tracks* where, if you fancy it, summer never ends and the season of sweet exotica flavours lasts all year long. **ÌXTAHUELE** get the motor running and drive us straight into the highly danceable jungle rhythm of **'Zebra Limbo'**. Read about the current lounge/exotica renaissance elsewhere in this issue, and keep tapping those feet.

Even if summer solstice is long gone, sun-blessed days are a good excuse to re-watch folk-horror cult *par excellence* *The Wicker Man*. On the occasion of the movie's 50th anniversary, **KATY J PEARSON** has reworked soundtrack highlight **'Willow's Song'** with help from London-based folk collective Broadside Hacks, turning it into a motorik-leaning, haunting séance. All hail May queens past, present and future.

A twisted, arcane folk essence can also be found at the core of **BAS JAN**'s new single. **'At The Counter'** finds the London-based quartet heading down to the pet shop and pondering daily errands over a patented blend of left-field pop and catchy art-punk. The song's video is just as surprising and unique as this reliably fascinating band.

Smooth bass and yacht rock-friendly keys introduce **LEVITATION ROOM**'s first new song in three years. **'Scene For An Exit'** seems concerned with moving on in more than one way. There's the lyrics, which consider the end of a relationship. But there's the music, too, caught in a similar state of evolution. The '60s psych love is still there, but the sound is opening up and growing wider, funkier and more soothing.

London power trio **BIG JOANIE** have picked a highlight from their latest album, 2022's *Back Home*, and turned it into a catchy treat brimming with the joy of a team-up we didn't know we needed. They're now singing 'Today' with one of their biggest influences, **KIM DEAL**. The result, released as a Bandcamp and YouTube exclusive, is nothing short of heartwarming.

You never thought you'd associate the word **'Supers preader'** with something cheerful, huh? Me neither. The new single from Brighton beachgoers **THE EVENING SONS** might very well be the proverbial exception that proves the rule. Because, frankly, three-minute blasts of pure powerpop crunch are among the few uplifting things this diseased world can still count on.

From Blighty shores to Minneapolis, where our next band is primarily based. **BLACK MARKET BRASS** recently celebrated 10 years together and announced a new album. Recorded live-to-tape, **'The Pit'** is an appetiser of the most mouth-watering kind: a slice of imposing soul-funk and afro-beat driven by banging horns and percussions.

After releasing a rather singular concept album (*Ramon*, "a queer Beatles rock opera"), singer-songwriter and poet **CALEB NICHOLS** returns with their most compelling song yet, **'Demon Twink'**. Predictable reviews that draw comparisons with Elliott Smith get a mention on the new record, so we'll keep one jump ahead and say that there's a strong Wilco vibe in here. And that a single so hooky can easily exist outside of analogies.

Lyrically, **SAINT SAVIOUR**'s latest song is an invitation to embrace the great mysteries that are life and love. **'Poetry'** translates that same embrace into sound, too: it starts as sparse, intimate singer-songwriter folk musing, then builds up and erupts – suddenly, it's the musical equivalent of running down sun-kissed hills, when small things reveal their huge significance. A gorgeous, whistle-powered jewel.

Let's keep on with the abrasive six-string energy, shall we? Not content with having released one of the most acclaimed indie-rock records of the year as part of North Carolina's Wednesday, **MJ LENDERMAN** keeps busy with solo belters. After 'Rudolph' (another highly recommended single) comes **'Knockin''**, the much-awaited studio rendition of a live staple. It is rowdy and rousing, fiery and shrouded in Middle America wistfulness.

Forty-three years after **'Too Many Creeps'**, New York post-punk heroes **BUSH TETRAS** are back with a strong selection of new songs. They welcome Sonic Youth's Steve Shelley on drums and turn down nostalgia: they're too busy rocking with urgency. Their music has become slightly more undefinable than in the past: **'They Live In My Head'** possesses both folk pondering and punk drive, at once comforting and sinister. It's as multitudinous as the times it describes.

Ìlxtahuele. Something exotic this way comes

composition that sweeps across the EP's six tracks. Also gone is Gabrinetti the soloist, his four-piece band capturing the rawness of live performance that anchors the music so perfectly. Listen in one go and listen loud – the band commands it – there are no singles here!

Sarah Gregory

KEITH RELF
Mr Zero / Knowing
★★★★

DEMON

Lead vocalist and harmonica player with '60s London R&B giants The Yardbirds, the late, great Keith Relf also made a couple of solo singles for Columbia at the height of the group's success in 1966.

This coupling was his first, here presented in the original French picture cover as released on the Riviera label. Originally cut by US hitmaker Bob Lind, who gave the world the likes of 'Elusive Butterfly' and 'Cheryl's Going Home', 'Mr Zero' is a moody slice of folk-centred pop, its waltzing rhythm, poetic lyrics and Relf's charming baritone delivery almost belying the song's underlying sadness: a tale of ultimate loneliness in a bustling metropolis. Meanwhile, 'Knowing', one of Relf's own compositions, is a short, musing affair that, whilst not as sad as the melancholic topside, isn't exactly overjoyed with itself and has a kind of wistful atmosphere. Both sides were co-produced by John's Children manager Simon Napier-Bell and talented Yardbirds bassist Paul Samwell-Smith.

Lenny Helsing

SIMF ONYX
Putsch Teil Eins / Widerstand
★★★★

DELIGHTS

In recent times the Delights label has proven to be an increasingly reliable arbiter of the best in psych-funk, cinematic grooves and lysergic electronic excursions, due in no small part to label head, deejay and musician Markey Funk, whose dedication to the cause and attention to detail provide a stamp of quality with each release.

Simf Onyx is a duo consisted of Markey himself and Haifa-based über-talented multi-instrumentalist Shuzin, and it carries forward the electronics and funk of their 2020 debut 45 'Magenta Skyline' across two brilliantly contrasting sides. 'Putsch Teil Eins' is a masterful slice of layered keys and downtempo rhythm that could've come straight outta '70s Berlin via '90s Bristol with its atmospheric bleeps and beats. Flipside 'Widerstand' sees Shuzin and Markey conjure up a masterful brew of heavy-funk and squelching synths that's should prove equally at home on the dancefloor as it does in your headphones.

Paul Osborne

THE SMOKING TREES
Funtime Sunshine / '66
★★★★

HYPNOTIC BRIDGE

Dumpster-diving *Rubbles* and *Nuggets* fanatics may know psychedelic music podcaster/compiler Martin Nuñez via his alter ego Sir Psych. But in the past decade he's recorded four albums of like-minded psychedelic pop (originally with LA Al Rivera, currently as a solo act). Following a five-year hiatus, The Smoking Trees make a welcome return with this new single.

'Funtime Sunshine' is a lysergic Beach Boys/Beatles pastiche drenched in sitars, dreamy vocals, tinkling keyboards, trippy lyrics and a rolling bass backdrop to prop up your drooping eyelids. In other words: *Sgt Pepper* on acid. The flip is a short burst of psychedelic garage-rock in tribute to "The monumental year the fuse was lit for an explosion of psychedelic music." It could easily sit on any of the numerous compilations Nuñez has created to honour and preserve his (and our) beloved freakbeat and psychedelic pop heritage and hopefully presages a new album soon.

Jeff Penczak

KAREN VERROS
You Just Gotta Know My Mind / Karen's Theme (You Just Gotta Know My Mind)
★★★

MEASURED MILE

Dana Gillespie's recording of the song written for her by former paramour Donovan may be the best-known, but this October 1965 single – released two and a half years earlier on Hollywood label Dot Records – was the first and has become the more collectable.

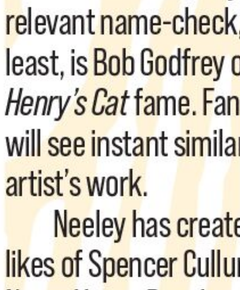
Little is known about Verros. She appeared on US pop TV shows, released a further two singles in '66, then vanished. Surprising, considering the record was arranged by Jack Nitzsche in his customarily dense mid-60s style and produced by Stones/Dead engineer David Hassinger and actor/singer Mike Minor. Verros obviously had some clout behind her or knew the right people. It's not as urgent as Gillespie's take and the track is mired a little under the sheer amount of fuzzy guitar action. For those for whom there isn't *enough* fuzzy guitar action, flip this new edition over and you'll hear Verros's voice replaced by a stinging lead guitar over the same backing track.

Andy Morten

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

EXTRACTED FRAMES: THE ANIMATED SKETCHBOOK OF MARK NEELEY
Mark Neeley
★★★

CEREAL BOX STUDIO



Mark Neeley is an independent animator from Cincinnati, Ohio, whose work is rooted in a love of music, particularly the kind favoured at *Shindig!* Towers. This handsome, Risograph-printed, silkscreen-bound volume collects together some of his hand-drawn sketches, storyboards and individual frames, grouped within the different projects he's worked on over the last few years.

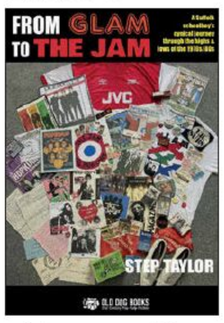
Neeley has a homespun, DIY style that's friendly and unpretentious. His work is warmly intimate and unashamedly cartoonish, with soft, rounded lines and a lively immediacy. Assorted influences and kindred spirits are mentioned in the accompanying text, including Fred Wolf's *The Point* and award-winning jazz animators John and Faith Hubley, but perhaps the most relevant name-check, for British readers at least, is Bob Godfrey of *Roobarb & Custard* and *Henry's Cat* fame. Fans of the cult UK animator will see instant similarities in the American artist's work.

Neeley has created music videos for the likes of Spencer Cullum, Michael Rault and Never Young Beach, and the sketches in this book will doubtless send readers to YouTube to watch them in action. Other projects herein include *Fragments,* a short film based on a 2019 west coast road trip by Neeley and his wife, but also informed by the subsequent death of their beloved cat, the Beatles-inspired *Faul! The Movie,* and Neeley's work for *The Aquarium Drunkard Picture Show,* the streaming channel of the LA-based music website. A coffee table book full of simple pleasures, *Extracted Frames* is a must for all fans of contemporary lo-fi animation.

Ben Graham

FROM GLAM TO THE JAM: A SUFFOLK CYNICAL SCHOOLBOY'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF THE 1970S/80S
Step Taylor
★★★★

OLD DOG



In this tribute to his formative years, Step Taylor doesn't coat his memories in a rosy glow of nostalgia but rather seems to enjoy revelling in the unvarnished truth of his passage to adolescence. Many readers will find a connection with the events and recollections contained in the book, as the chapters take in past children's TV shows, crappy local discos, forgotten foods and, of course, music.

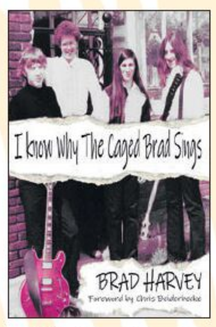
After a brief run through the author's earliest memories we hit the meat of the book, which concerns his journey through the school system and the various trends and songs encountered along the way. The writing drips with sly wit as forgotten films such as *Never Too Young To Rock* are briefly dragged back into the light and Taylor reveals the intricacies of the Suffolk dialect while detailing the class system and sporting prowess of the local villages.

There's real detail in the writing as lapsed memories are brought back into focus and Step recalls, for instance, how his school rough book had more attention lavished on its cover decoration than it ever did on the note and draft collection it was originally designed. He also outlines his disdain for sarcastic record shop staff. Finally, as mentioned in the title, there are fond memories of The Jam and albums are rated, badges purchased and fan club mail-outs discussed. We'd wager good money that readers of a certain age will gently smile and nod their heads as parallel personal memories are triggered by the book's revelations.

Henry Hutton

I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BRAD SINGS
Brad Harvey
★★★

BILLION BRADS



Memoirs by unsuccessful musicians are almost an established genre now (see three further examples on these pages), one given momentum by the rise of on-demand self-publishing. Inevitably, the quality of such tomes is variable, but despite its unpromising title, this is one of the better examples.

It helps that besides being singer-guitarist in midwestern powerpoppers PS (another unpromising name), Brad Harvey spent much of the '90s as a writer and editor on Quad Cities music mag *QIL,* and so knows how to tell a good story. As much an Illinois area scene history as an autobiography, his reminiscences are peppered with generous anecdotes about other bands and musicians, some famous, most not. Cameo appearances by name acts like The Replacements, Husker Dü and The Jayhawks keep the attention of readers unfamiliar with the midwestern musical underground of the '70s, '80s and '90s, while Harvey's own tale – of never giving up on your dreams but knowing just when and where to compromise – remains universal. Influenced by British Invasion rock and semi-local boys made good Cheap Trick, and enabled by punk, PS self-released their sole single in 1978 before weathering the new-wave wars of the early '80s. The pre-grunge alt-rock movement of the mid-decade seemed to offer a lifeline, but PS had fizzled out by '90. Filled with character sketches of the good, bad and eccentric, many of whom die too young, plus long drives, small-town record shops, heartbreak and determination, *I Know Why...* is an engaging account of blue-collar rock 'n' roll dreams that never quite took flight.

Ben Graham

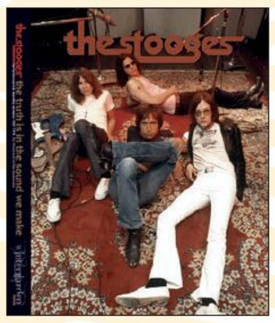
Summer Reading Special

THE STOOGES: THE TRUTH IS IN THE SOUND WE MAKE

Per Nilsen and Carlton P Sandercock

★★★★★

WINTERGARDEN PUBLISHING



Over the years Easy Action has done a sterling job of preserving and documenting the recorded legacy of The Stooges. However, the arrival of this colossal and instantly collectable book may be the label's finest hour.

Brought to you by the partnership of Easy Action boss Sandercock and author Per Nilsen, whose in-depth research originally published as *Iggy & The Stooges: On Stage 1967-1974* forms the basis of this super deluxe large format volume, which positively dwarfs all previous histories of the first citizens of Ann Arbor. Gig by gig, session by session and now updated and revised this encyclopaedic undertaking exhaustively brings to life the complete unexpurgated legend of The Stooges sustained assault on the rock establishment with access to contemporary reviews, eyewitness accounts, archive interviews with all the major players, and the most spectacular array of Stooges photographs ever assembled in one place.

Appropriately this no-expense-spared labour of love signs off with an image of the tatty and stained contract for the fateful hometown show at Detroit's Michigan Palace on February 9th 1974 at which The Stooges crashed and burned for the final time. An engrossing saga of against all odds outsider triumph, subversive small-town trailblazers, self-destruction and ultimately chaotic breakdown chronicled in near-microscopic detail and accompanied by an unprecedented array of rare photographic content, the book is a triumph on every level. The Stooges book to end all Stooges books.

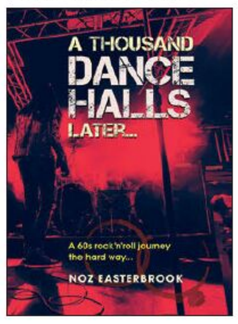
Grahame Bent

A THOUSAND DANCE HALLS LATER...

Noz Easterbrook

★★★★

SELF-PUBLISHED



Edward Norris 'Noz' Easterbrook seemingly crammed 10 years of experience into his three and a bit as bassist with Birkenhead band The Klubs. His vivid recollections balance workaday life with a wide-eyed wonder untarnished by 50-odd years of "coulda-woulda-shoulda" reflection.

It's yer classic late '60s archetype: teenagers form band, cobble together equipment, learn a few Kinks and Stones songs, become popular locally and over the river in Liverpool, gain and lose personnel, have their minds blown by a trip to perform at a London hotspot, struggle with indifferent studio staff (in Abbey Road, natch), find themselves playing a residency in France for local gangsters, are then managed by different gangsters back in London and leave just one privately pressed single as their entire released legacy. Throw in a handful of tragically youthful deaths, family and marital concerns, and severe mental health issues (Easterbrook's own, about which he is refreshingly opaque) and *A Thousand Dance Halls Later...* becomes as much human interest story as rock 'n' roll memoir.

The detail here is so rich you can almost smell the petrol and feel every bump in the road as our heroes traverse the country on a diet of sandwiches and ciggies, appearing on precarious £15 bills with the great and good and the long-forgotten. At the heart of it is Easterbrook's transition from 16-year-old Wirral boy to embittered journeyman; from town hall gang fights to happenings and freak-outs – all before the age of 20. "The wide-eyed innocence I'd had just three years earlier had gone," Easterbook writes, comparing The Marquee to The Cavern. "I could now see the dirt on the walls."

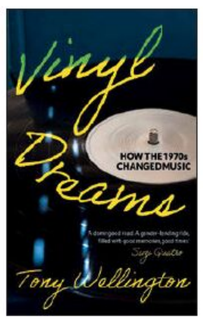
Andy Morten

VINYL DREAMS: HOW THE 1970S CHANGED MUSIC

Tony Wellington

★★★★

MONASH UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING



For all our enduring fascination with the '60s, as Tony Wellington shows in this highly entertaining study, the following decade was no less, and possibly even more, important to the evolution of popular music.

Vinyl Dreams is widely, deeply researched and the pacey narrative moves chronologically through some of the more important developments of each year. Wellington understandably focuses on Britain and the United States but there are fascinating digressions into the music scenes of other countries, including his native Australia. Commercial colossi such as Elton John and Led Zeppelin dictate much of the story. Yet Wellington also frequently steers the reader off the main road to less travelled routes taken by the *avant-garde*. He does so while showing how musicians reacted to the politically tumultuous decade.

No two authors approaching such a panoramic history of popular music would ever populate their narrative with the same cast of characters. *Vinyl Dreams* arguably showcases prog and hard-rock to the marginalisation and exclusion of other important artists. Nick Drake and Gram Parsons are mentioned only in terms of their untimely passing, the likes of Neu! not at all. Wellington's disdain for David Bowie is a subjective judgement but by any objective measure Kraftwerk had an impact that merits more than a solitary paragraph.

What *is* included within these pages is nonetheless a lively narrative punctuated by informed opinion that will animate renewed discussion about the '70s and crucially encourage readers to listen with renewed interest to old favourites and seek out undiscovered gems.

Clive Webb

A YEAR IN THE COUNTRY: LOST TRANSMISSIONS

Stephen Prince

★★★★★

A YEAR IN THE COUNTRY

For any self-respecting hauntologist, *A Year In The Country* is a treasure trove of wyrd delights. Featuring music, art, and the written word, Stephen Prince's website spans the outreaches of folk culture, pastoralism and the uncanny. And it doesn't stop there. Prince has also released an accompanying collection of musical gems alongside a library of non-fiction works that includes the eponymously-titled *A Year In The Country.* It is this set of books – meditations on all things pastoral and hauntological from acid-folk to *The Prisoner*, Nigel Kneale to Ghost Box, Ben Wheatley to *The Good Life* – that have won him so many fans. And now, Prince has returned with the latest volume *Lost Transmissions*.

Blissfully, we're immediately in familiar territory, delving deep into the world of the occult and near-dystopia interweaved with the aural and visual cues that underlie this leftfield esoterica. This time we see Prince exploring the supernatural and paranormal by way of long-forgotten TV series *Leap In The Dark*; the world of Boards Of Canada and their role as the unifying force between off-kilter '90s beats and the sonics of Ghost Box; the classic sci-fi dystopia of *Rollerball* and *Gattaca*; and a timely nod to female electronica courtesy of Cosey Fanni Tutti and Delia Derbyshire. Not to mention a fascinating consideration of Paul Weller through the lens of hauntological music.

Without doubt another invaluable addition to the A Year In The Country canon, we're already awaiting the next transmission.

Sarah Gregory

25 years in the country. Boards Of Canada

Beatwave hijinks courtesy of (clockwise from top left) The Razorbills, Graham Day & The Forefathers, Ye Nuns, The Capellas
PHOTO: JEFF PITCHER

BEATWAVE: VARIOUS
The Pig, Hastings
FRIDAY 21ST JULY–SUNDAY 23RD JULY

Now in its seventh year, Hastings' weekend of beat, surf, garage and trash (at least that's what it says on the wall in giant cut out lettering) remains a free event. For that entry price you get 10 bands and 20-odd deejays plus a genuine game show on Sunday (a chance to see various members of bands head-scratching and attempting to complete *Only Connect* walls).

The first of the weekend's live bands is the wonderful Hampshire Hamburg-era trio The Keller-Tones playing exquisite versions of 'Wondrous Place' and 'Jezebel' among a dozen others. They are followed by the ever-reliable English Gentlemen Of Punk-Rock The Fallen Leaves; Rob Symmons remains the greatest yet least heralded guitarist of The Class Of 76. First night headliners are the new direction organ-fired Beatpack. The former local lads made (almost) good play a trademark high-octane set peppered with cuts from their latest *All Good Things* album.

Saturday's fun kicks off at 2pm after a further three deejay sets with a debut show from Bexhill-based Thee Shuns. The quartet have all trodden the Beatwave boards in other bands down the years but this new incarnation kicks ass with a set ignited by frontman Zac's guitar and covers of three of the tracks from the seminal 1984 Big Beat EP *Trash On The Tube/4 By 4*. Another local act, Link Bat & The Bat Rays, fronted by *Rock 'n' Roll Voodoo* illustrator extraordinaire Vince Ray, also kick ass with their greaser Link Wray covers.

It's still only 4pm but hey, guess what? The next act proceeds to kick already red raw asses of a packed venue. The Capellas are the latest project of wife-and-husband team Elsa and Mike Whittaker. Their intense soul and boogaloo revue excites every bit as much as their Missing Souls, Jack Cades, Baron Four, and Vicars incarnations, and their originals stand up so well to their choice cover versions you won't spot the join. Elsa is born to front bands, has knowing sass in spades, a voice like abraded treacle, and you should see them as soon as you can. Rounding off the afternoon session, in a slight break from tradition is a set of ramshackle Diddley-esquetrianism courtesy of Bo Squiddly (Beatwave has an octopus mascot this year) aided by Ye Nuns' Bongo and Kate, guitarist Leo Barnard and the venerable Lord Jasper. With barely a pause for chips and fish we reconvene at 7pm sharp for west country Yucatan surf champs Los Dedos. Yeah, you got it, they kicked ass.

Next up, Marc Riley's faves, the world's foremost Monks tribute band Ye Nuns. Alas. They didn't kick ass... Only joking! Their 45-minute set simply tears the venue to pieces. Two of the nuns now call this town their home, but every time they play in Hastings they leave behind a smouldering wreck of an audience. And tonight, we even get a rare encore. How do you follow that? Simple. Parade four caped, masked, fez wearers through the audience to a voodoo beat and cast some sort of spell over the poor saps. Yorkshire's Razorbills are a whole lot of fun and in many ways the only act that could have followed Ye Nuns.

But then someone has to follow them, and up step none other than Graham Day, Allan Crockford and Wolf Howard aka Graham Day & The Forefathers. Surely all Shindiggers are familiar with their immaculate CV? Prisoners covers were there none, but otherwise we were treated royally by these genuine A-listers.

Seth Migrianne

BREANNA BARBARA
The Hope & Ruin, Brighton
WEDNESDAY 10TH JULY

If musical talent, charisma and hard work still count for anything, then Breanna Barbara should be a major star. Recognition is starting to arrive in the US but is slow off the mark over here. Nevertheless, the 50-odd folk in the audience for the last of her current UK tour dates have a show to remember and definite bragging rights in years to come.

Barbara sets out her *avant*-blues stall with the tension-building 'You Got Me High' and the pounding 'Rise' before erupting into the existentialist psychedelic soul of 'Nothin' But Time', the title track of her latest album. In a sequinned jumpsuit that's noticeably threadbare at the knees, Barbara is a consummate performer, her stunning voice shining on the slow burn of 'Me Too' and the intimate, breathtaking 'No Way Out'. The driving psych-rock of 'Weight Of The World' shows she's no mean guitarist either, and while her backing musicians may look like a bunch of loose-wrapped groovers, they prove themselves as tight and well-drilled as any Motown revue band, the occasional subtly choreographed pose or knee-drop coming over as genuinely dramatic rather than cornball comic.

On the likes of 'Weaning' and a funky 'Landslide' Barbara manages to make blues-based rock sound supple, modern, and urgent once again, treading in the footsteps of the form's powerful female pioneers rather than the macho bluster of later popularisers. The garage-band hustle of 'Diamond Light' and offbeat boogie 'Mirage Dreams' send us home smiling and satisfied, already anticipating the next time around.

Ben Graham

KUUNATIC
CODEX SERAFINI
The Green Door Store, Brighton
FRIDAY 14TH JULY

Did you know there's a subterranean pagan temple under Brighton railway station? Okay, most evenings The Green Door Store is a regular gig and club venue, but tonight those escaping the downpour outside are greeted by two complementary cults casting sonic, visual and atmospheric spells to draw us ecstatically into their magic circles.

Clad in blood-red robes and fringed masks, Codex Serafini hit us with droning psych-stoner love dirges, the uncanny siren voice of singer Ana-Maria echoing through the Gong/Sabbath wall of doom and captivating a hometown crowd. In contrast, Kuunatic are spare and disciplined, the Tokyo trio looking like high priestesses or renegade ayahuasca shamans in their matching loose white outfits and Dayglo face-paint. On opener 'Dewbow', Yuko's tumbling beats, Fumie's percussive synth sounds and Shoko's heavy fuzz bass fuse tribal post-punk with Japanese traditional music, effortlessly conjuring the alien world of Kuurandia that's the subject of their songs. The chanted

"How do you follow that? Simple. Parade four caped, masked, fez wearers through the audience to a voodoo beat and cast some sort of spell over the poor saps"

Breanna Barbara
PHOTO: ROB ORCHARD

Wand
PHOTO: TESS CARGES

Lady Apple Tree
PHOTO: TESS CARGES

vocals and deceptively complex rhythms of 'Full Moon Spree' are childlike and ritualistic, like a cosmic skipping song, while the intense, hypnotic pulse of 'Lava Naksh' is a science-fiction reimagining of PiL's 'Flowers Of Romance' mixed with Red Krayola's deconstructed psychedelia and ancient witchcraft. There are gothic overtones to the two-part 'Desert Empress', with rolling bass, echoing yelps, and sinuous melodies suggesting Siouxsie & The Banshees in dub, and after the mist-wreathed occult trip music of 'Raven's War', Kuunatic break the venue's curfew with insistently catchy encore 'Roho Ulio Toweka'. Magic is afoot, and tonight we're all believers.

Ben Graham

LADY APPLE TREE

Gold Diggers, Los Angeles

FRIDAY 14TH JULY

It's an exciting evening with one album release (Sam Burton's fantastic *Dear Departed*) and one soon-to-be-released (Lady Apple Tree's emotive self-titled EP). Lady Apple Tree is opening for the better-known Burton; hopefully, she'll snare us with her lasso, and we'll be back the day she headlines.

While some might want to liken frontwoman Haylie Hostetter to an ethereal nymph – and, admittedly, she does seem to float – a silken, slender sledgehammer might be a more apt comparison. Her voice knocks us out. When she opens her mouth, the audience is visibly blown back a few inches. It's piercing, but never shrill. Smooth, but never timid. And while we should've known what to expect given the few stunning songs she's released in her brief career, the quiet beauty still rattles us. We even believe her when she sings, "I'm only but a wanderer." How could a voice like this stay still?

With help from Connor Gallaher on pedal steel and a sweetly supportive Burton on guitar and vocals, Lady Apple Tree soars through her all-too-short set. The best of the bunch, 'Silver Hands', sounds like a Laurel Canyon classic. The LA crowd seems to savour every second of it. For her penultimate song, Hostetter tackles Linda Rondstat's 'Long Long Time' and does it every justice. Her vibrato isn't just a performative stunt, it's an emotional tool that she wields perfectly.

Tess Carges

WAND

The Lodge Room, Los Angeles

SUNDAY 23RD JULY

The Lodge Room is filled tonight with an assortment of rockers, though surprisingly, it's a young crowd. Wand fans rush to the front, while those uncertain about which Wand will join us tonight stay on the peripheries. Will it be Radiohead Wand? Tame Impala Wand? Hawkwind Wand?

For better or worse, we get a blurred mix. On lead guitar and vocals, Cory Hanson pulls many stunts. Ever a fan of feedback, he ecstatically waves his guitar at the mic and occasionally uses a violin bow to strike a cool, muted tone. They play songs from across their catalogue, but fail to show their true range amidst the noise. Between songs, they let the reverb/feedback loop play on, strumming disparate chords here and there, before triumphantly banging into the next song. Because of this, the colourful group appears monotone. It's not until the fifth song that we get a momentary rest, in which Hanson gestures towards the sound engineers and says, "I could use less of whatever is going on;" he heard too much of his voice and we heard far too little. Once the audio is sorted, we hear Wand's great melodic instincts a bit better.

Fittingly, near the end of the set, a hole opens in the dancefloor, a sort of anti-mosh-pit, in which the inebriated and the hypnotised rush forward to showcase their spasms. The surrounding audience decidedly tries to ignore the void, and an out-of-sorts Wand plays on.

Tess Carges

NUGGETS GOLDEN JUBILEE

City Winery, New York

SATURDAY 29TH JULY

Skip over the history lesson if you know it already. In 1972, music journalist Lenny Kaye – still working in a Bleecker Street record store – brought a preposterous idea to Elektra Records' Jac Holzman. A double-LP compilation of songs from the mid-60s; with no genre-based commonality other than the fact that they were songs that Lenny liked. Some pop songs, some hard-rock songs, some goofy psychedelia, and a healthy helping of "garage-punk" – a term (and genre) that did not even exist yet. And Holzman, in a move that still has me shaking my head in wonderment a half-century hence, said, "Hey, great idea, let's do that." And in that instant, the rediscovery of a vast treasure trove of largely-forgotten marvellousness – without which this magazine and many others would not even exist – was kick-started. And the rest is history.

Or is it? Because there are some major misconceptions to clear up. *Nuggets* did not sell well, contrary to what you may have heard. In fact, it hardly sold at all. But a large percentage of those who bought it started bands. Or fanzines. Or both. And by the end of that decade, the mid-60s were back again. In a mushrooming tornado of re-releases and new artists, which is still mushrooming today.

This show (and one in Los Angeles) comes on the heels of the 50th anniversary box set. Both shows are compered by Kaye himself, in both of his born-to-do-this roles as guitarist and raconteur extraordinaire. Using basically the same band as the previous NYC show in 2017: music director Tony Shanahan on bass, Jack Petruzzelli and James Mastro on guitars, Glen Burtnik on keyboards, and Dennis Diken on drums.

With that rack of pedigrees – astonishingly competent, true believers, and people who don't take anything any more seriously than it needs to be taken – this evening promises to be a delicious combination of jaw-droppingly amazing and sloppily endearing, and that's exactly what it is. The grin never left the audience's faces.

First of all, in a master stroke, the big star of the proceedings – Patti Smith herself – leads off the show, with a rousing 'I Had Too Much To Dream Last Night' (the first song on the original LP, and arguably its mission statement) and then 'Hey Joe'. Thirty-three songs in all, from 20 luminaries – all of whom have done their homework admirably and take no prisoners. Vicki (Peterson) Cowsill, late of The Bangles, turns in a genre-spanning one-two punch of 'Laugh Laugh' and 'Lies', Steve Wynn represents Texas with '99th Floor' and 'You're Gonna Miss Me' and then there's Richard Lloyd, Marshall Crenshaw, Ivan Julian, Bob Mould... ending up with a gloriously shambolic all-hands-on-deck rip through 'Gloria'.

There had been some nervousness about this event. Something like this can so easily flounder and sink in a sea of good intentions. Not this time. This show is precisely as it should have been. A true celebration. Academia and trainspotting be damned.

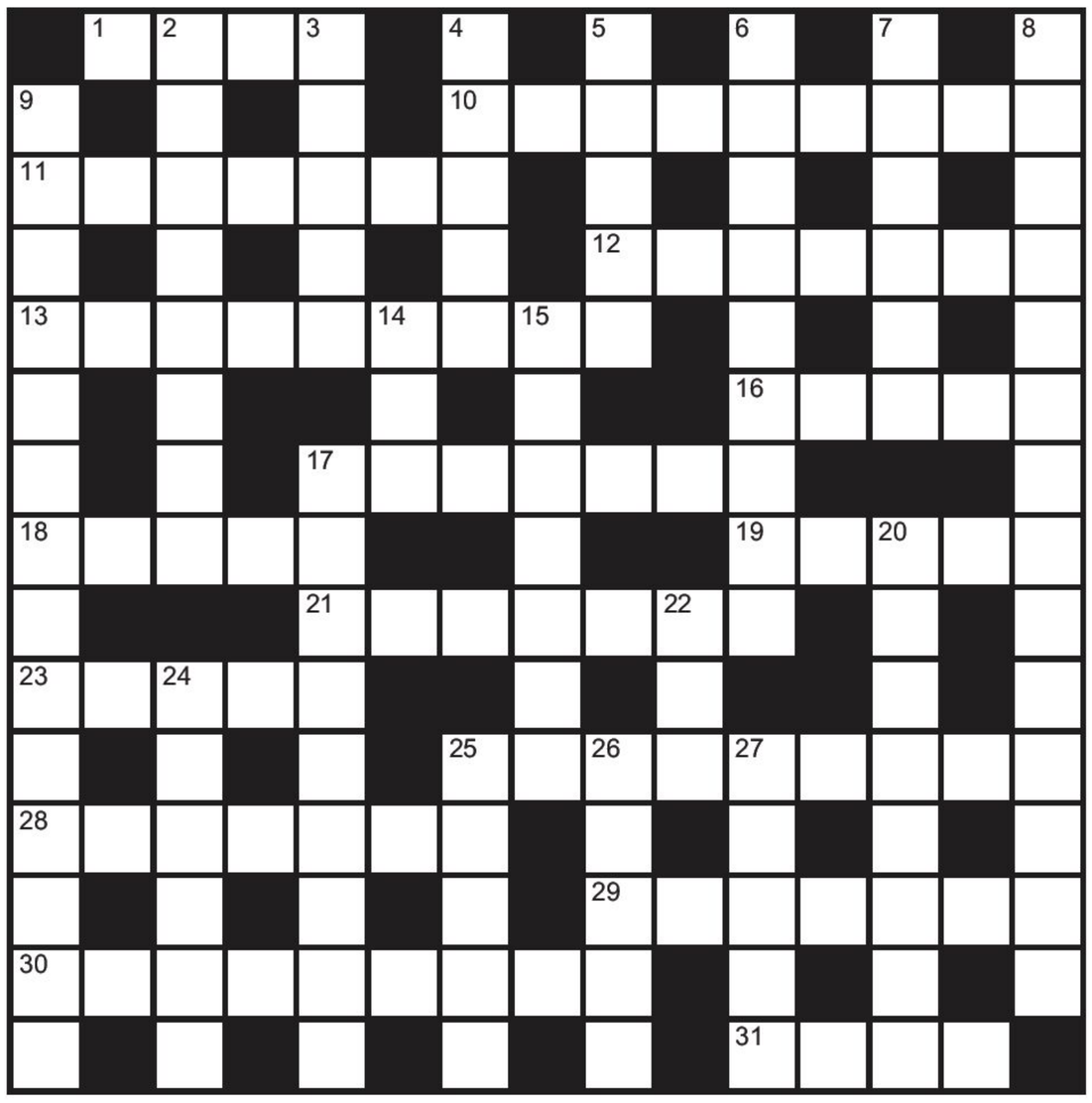
Mike Fomatale

Prize Crossword

by Stuart Draper

Of all the visionary '60s acts whose original success has been dwarfed by decades of cult acclaim and recognition, **THE CREATION** may take the prize (and would certainly win a fist fight, if it came to it). Their recorded legacy of just 25 songs (give or take) has rarely been out of print since their early '80s renaissance, the most recent addition being a vinyl repro of 1967 album *We Are Paintermen* and this rather natty 2-CD edition, which contains 13 bonus tracks and an illustrated booklet. And we have a copy to give away.

To enter, simply send your completed crossword to *Shindig!* #143 Crossword, 40 Windsor Crescent, Frome, Somerset BA11 2EA or email a legible scan of it to win@shindig-magazine.com with the words "S! #143 crossword competition" in the subject line, no later than 5th October. And don't forget to include your name and address!



Across

1 Dylan takes a thousand, love heads it for Blossom Toes live set (4)
10 Hitler ego demolished by The Rothchilds (1,3,3,2)
11 If Jake's description by The Gaslamp Killer causes offence, there's none taken after editing (3,4)
12 Strange superiority complex shuns promiscuity, this we shall obtain for Alan Hull and Skip Bifferty (7)
13 And perfection for Cope has odd sergeants in advance (9)
16 The American Blues stays on deprived of the New Testament – utter embroidery maybe? (3,2)
17 Thomas Walsh bathes small dog, salutes Captain (7)
18 Some tremendous part of this measured jazz band became Cymande (5)
19 The Globbots pursue access from our cover star, even trying a concealed approach (5)
21 Brutal is bad yet holds uranium, with bells that launched a label (7)
23 Back to the farm with The Move, when Alice claims the last of their incomes (5)
25 Orchestrated requires order without ado - Damned's Shel Talmy production has a case baby chase (9)
28 Mixer mixes with Sainsbury's clothing to complete the magic for this Saga band (7)
29 Suspect seaside hunts MGMT's mystery (7)
30 The life of Richard Morton Jack begins with duck theft (4,5)
31 Granted, he was a whirlpool guitarist with The Equals (4)

Down

2 East joins another agitated showing The Act's flip was a single pump (3,5)
3 Dynamite start to Ringo Apple comp, but it's blandest without end (5)
4 Hair cut hippie centre blissful-sounding album (5)
5 White Fence have the stomach to head eccentric Essex (5)
6 In isn't in the punisher with a Sisyphean Steppenwolf (3,6)
7 Hodgson and John had catalogue characteristics (6)
8 My art deco gnome is wild for Minnie Riperton debut (4,2,2,6)
9 The Delays reckon an extended Supergrass track is arriving (4,4,6)
14 Somewhat unsung Glaswegian band requiring turning on or down (1,1,1)
15 Caesar spied cleaning before Leaf Hound had tune titled in error (double track for '90s-formed Coventry band) (7)
17 Woof (3,6)
20 Her death is unnatural for the laugh with the wind band (3,5)
22 Giddy from 17 Across was on this Andy Partridge label – it's a quarter of your crossword setter (3)
24 Ant leaves income tax in disarray, crosses border for anti-Nixon Jefferson Airplane single (6)
25 Seabird soundalike follows Marianne to lead Jade (5)
26 Micro deodorant conceals workplace of Byrds' sweetheart (5)

Name

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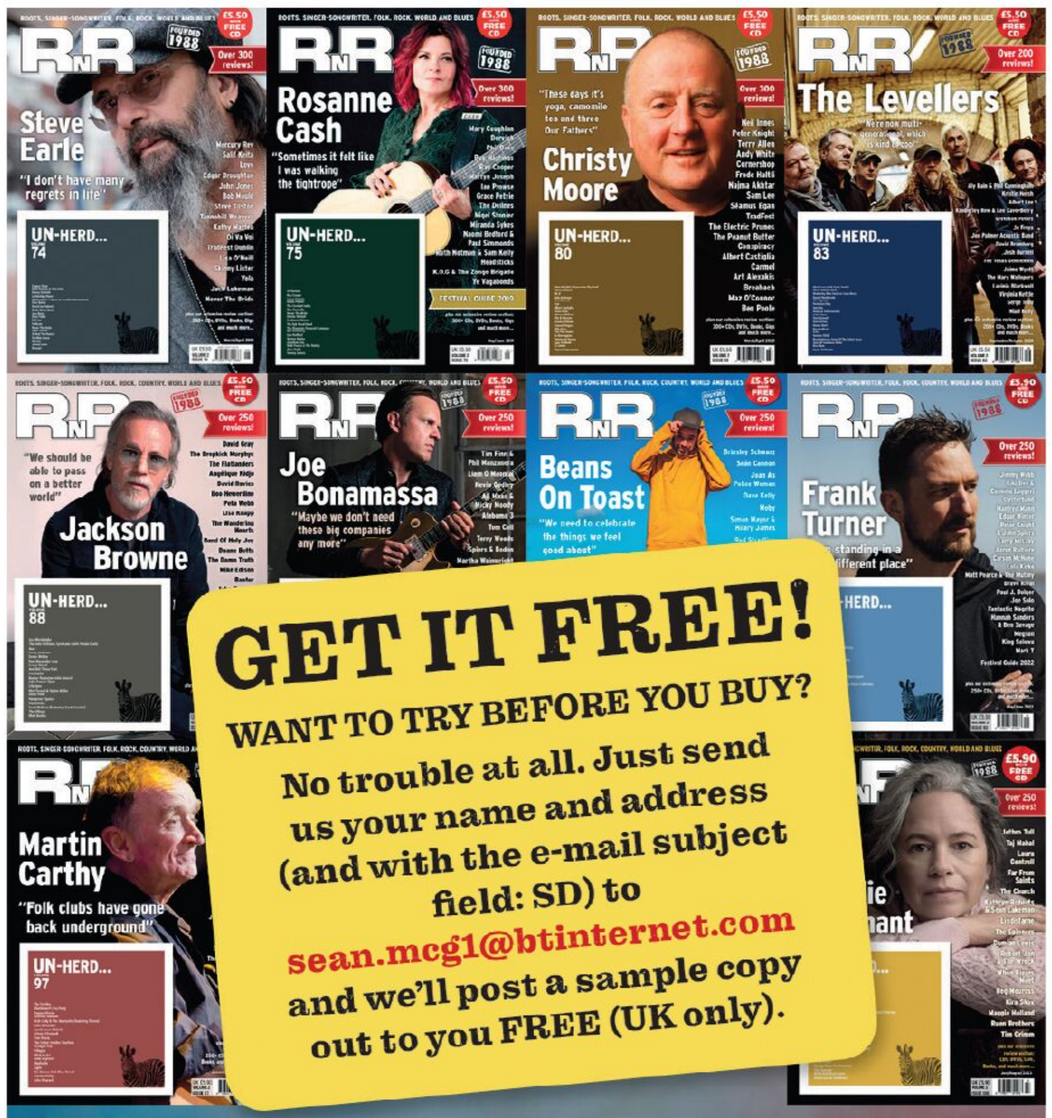
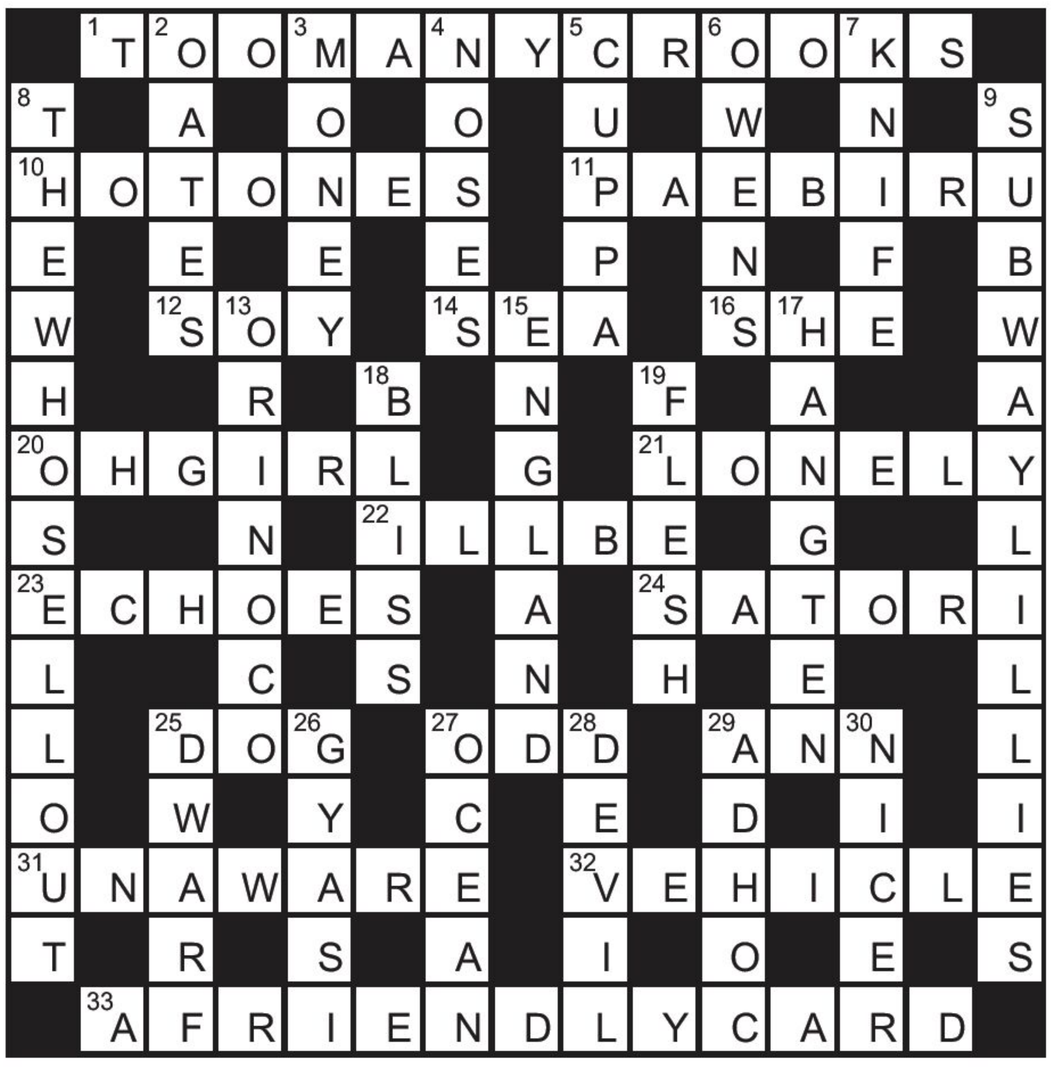
Phone **Email**



Issue 142 crossword solution



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New Distractions

by Dream Phases - NER-048

Emerging from the City of Angels' neo-psychedelic rock scene in 2017, Dream Phases reflects Calfornia's natural splendor and adventuresome inner spirit in its music.

The earthy-yet-exalted sounds of the Byrds, the Beach Boys and Crosby, Stills, Nash ,Young – as well as latter-dayartists like the Rain Parade, Elliott Smith and Autolux – figure into the band's family tree. Whilethis lineage is worth noting, what comes through in the band's latest work is an individual approach that translates the experiences of its members into something undeniably compelling.

First track to last, you can hear this vitality in New Distractions, Dream Phases' sophomore album.

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EXCLUSIVE RELEASES

Hold Drugs Dear

By R.J. Bloke - NER-049

Hold Drugs Dear is a dynamic solo effort from RJ Bloke, front man & songwriter for Los Angeles based alt-country, americana, roots rock quartet Patrolled By Radar.

These warm and urgent analog recordings feature an array of stellar guests including Alex Moore, Spencer Livingston (Livingmore), Eli Wulfmeier (Leroy from the North), Peter Curry (Los Straitjackets, Nick Lowe), and Davey Allen (Eric Burdon, Davey & The Midnights).

This collection of well-crafted poetic and melodic songs are sure to appeal to fans of Dylan, Ray Davies, Jeff Tweedy, Lennon & Paul McCartney and many more, truly magificent.

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CA Quintet

Trip Thru Hell

CANDY FLOSS, US, 1969

JACKET DESIGN: ROD EATON, PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAN FORREST

CHRISTOPHER BUDD enters the inferno and meets a terrifyingly covetable psych oddity

While heavy metal fans have enjoyed decades of depictions of Lucifer's lair on their LP covers, such images are csomewhat rarer outside of the genre. When album artists *have* wanted to illustrate visions of the underworld, a bit of Hieronymus Bosch usually does the job. But in 1969 Minnesota, as CA Quintet were putting together their boldly conceptual debut album *Trip Thru Hell,* one young artist took a practically unique and uniquely practical approach to assembling the LP's creative cover art.

"I had zero graphic design background when the CA Quintet album was done," explains designer Rod Eaton. "But I had a lot of photography experience. I was also interested in film-making and wrote a column for *Super8Filmaker* magazine on special effects. Making miniature sets was something with which I had experience."

Rod had originally come into the Quintet's orbit through his musical abilities, drumming for Minneapolis garage band The Underbeats in the early '60s and later with TC Atlantic, and he's most proud of that band's 'Faces', a terrific, sub-three-minute slice of electric sitar and fuzz, originally released on the short-lived Turtle label.

"While I was playing with TC Atlantic, I was also a part-time recording engineer at Dove Studios in Bloomington, a Minneapolis suburb," Rod continues. "'Faces' was recorded there, as was CA Quintet's *Trip Thru Hell*.

"The idea of the album cover, the look and the use of a miniature set etc was mine," he explains. "I was essentially the art director." The miniature set would need capturing on film, however, as would the human figures taking their unfortunate trip through the landscape. "Alan Forrest was a Minneapolis freelance photographer. He'd done many band photos and he and I had worked together for a few years on various band projects. When the *Trip Thru Hell* album came along, I knew Alan would be the photographer.

"He and I discussed the concept, then Alan photographed a model in several positions. He printed the images on black & white film, dyed them with red food colouring, then carefully cut each figure out. The cut-outs were supported on the back with wire. The Hell set was constructed in Alan's studio on a tabletop placed a few feet in front of a large red seamless background. Most of the set is aluminium foil over cardboard formers. That was spray-painted red. We spread grit and other material on the foil to add texture. Bits and pieces of plant material were placed. The dead withered trees I made from twisted wire covered with tape and painted. In the centre of the area, we included a shallow depression and filled it with water. Dry ice created the white fog layer.

"For today's reader it's important to remember there was no Photoshop in the '60s," adds Rod. "Everything on the album cover was created in front of the camera and photographed. Only the type layer was added later. Today a cover like this would be created layer by layer in Photoshop, but I'm not sure the result would be much different or better." As for the tabletop Hades, where did it end up? "The miniature set was destroyed as soon as we'd seen the photos of it!"

Rod's work was so original that it's surprising he didn't design more sleeves. "I actually did another local album cover: TC Atlantic's live LP. The front is solid blue with small type in the lower corner. I laid out the back of the jacket." His ambitions at the time seem to have been more musical, however. "I played in several other bands professionally, then part time, into the early '80s." Rod formed his own company and worked producing audio-visual programs, "large scale multi-projector installations for corporations, video tapes, and a few films," before supervising television commercials for US retailer Target. The desire to put paint to canvas has never left him. "After retiring, I became interested in graphic design and create posters and print pieces for The Minnesota Streetcar Museum, where I am a volunteer streetcar operator".

We're glad to hear he's keeping busy – you know who makes work for idle hands. S!

With thanks to Ken Erwin

"Alan photographed a model in several positions. He printed the images on black and white film, dyed them with red food colouring, then carefully cut each figure out"

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In which **MICHAEL BJÖRN** investigates worthy albums that have somehow eluded reissue, compilation or acclaim

MIKE ABSALOM

Hector And Other Peccadillos

(Philips, UK, 1972)

Mike Absalom's self-titled Vertigo 1971 LP may be his most collectable today, but it sold little at the time. Instead, it was the follow-up *Hector And Other Peccadillos* that moved him closer to the pop mainstream. It was released in December '72, and a month later Mike was on TV charmingly singing about drugs in 'Hector The Dope Sniffing Hound' and satirising the police in 'WPC Sadie Stick'. "It's the album that got me on *The Old Grey Whistle Test*," confirms Mike.

Absalom's Vertigo/Philips deal was brokered through shady connections. "I met Amory Kane, who said he was Bod Dylan's cousin and his real name was Zimmerman. Nobody told the truth in the music business. Kane introduced me to a guy in Greek Street, who made me sign lots of papers and then put me in touch with Phillips. But when I asked for royalties, he just flashed a knife at me."

Patrick Campbell-Lyons produced the Vertigo album, but it's unclear what role he had in the follow-up. "I was stoned most of the time in those days," explains Mike, who also had no hand in recruiting session musicians, including guitarist Ray Fenwick. They were all well-known pop musicians, but most of the time in the studio they were kicking coffee cups around that had been left by The Rolling Stones the day before."

The song 'Tax For The Taxman' was likely inspired by Monty Python's 'Seduced Milkman' sketch. "I used to have coffee at The Troubadour in Earls Court," says Mike. "Eric Idle came in and wanted to hire a musician to play to the live studio audience during scene breaks. They placed me between the set and the audience, but when I started singing, John Cleese came up behind me and did this silly walk. The audience loved that and wasn't interested in me. It was kind of a disaster."

Mike continued plugging the new album on the college circuit until a Lewes Technical College gig with John Peel deejaying about a year later changed things. "My gay manager Mitch wanted me to dress up in frilly silken shirts, and people were shouting 'poof' from the audience. When this guy came out behind me and started mimicking me, I chased the fucker, threw him on the ground and grabbed him by the throat. I was furious, but my manager and his boyfriend Peter rushed in and pulled me off, because it wouldn't be good for business, I suppose, if I killed him. They shoved a pipe with Red Lebanese hashish into my mouth and paid for transcendental meditation the next day to calm me down. In the end, I went nuts for that."

Mike focused less on music, eventually married a meditation teacher and emigrated to Canada.

Mike Absalom before the Red Leb and TM

audo heaven

MURDO MATHEWSON surveys the latest hi-fi and audio gadgetry

WE'RE JAMMIN'

Apogee Jam X

£199

soundtech.co.uk/musicretail/apogee

The Apogee Jam X is a compact, simple audio interface. Solidly built, the portable Jam X provides your bass, guitar, or keys with a route to your iOS device or Windows machine. Perhaps less well-known is that the Santa Monica-based maker's built-in DAC sounds divine when outputting digital tunes for headphone-based listening, rivalling similarly priced, non-interface-equipped portable DACs.

THE BLUE(TOOTH) TONE

TONE Turntable

£349

tone-factory.co.uk

Affordable, easy-to-use, and beautifully designed products – that is newcomer TONE's mantra. The Bluetooth-equipped Turntable is the Czech-based maker's debut model, and it certainly looks the part. TONE partnered with turntable specialist Pro-Ject Audio on the deck's design and works closely with Danish cartridge guru Ortofon, so we expect good things from the newbie.

CHANNEL ORANGE

Orange Amps Orange Box

£275

orangeamps.com

A Bluetooth speaker launch from Orange Amps was surely a "when not if" case. Adopting the classic style and rugged build of the British maker's guitar amps, this portable model – the Orange Box-L is bigger and Mains-only – offers up to 15 hours of playtime, supports Bluetooth 5.0 and houses a mix of digital and analogue amplification. The Orange Box is a welcome addition to an ocean of portables.

ON MY RADIO

Pure Woodland

£139

pure-audio.com

Another portable Bluetooth speaker, yes, but the Pure Woodland also offers one of our favourite music sources, radio. Equipped with DAB+ and FM, the Woodland lets you hand over control of the tunes to, say, the lovely Tom Robinson instead of the calculated AI Gorithm. The new Pure is ready for the outdoors with a rugged build and water-resistant rating. Mind, that sofa's awfully comfy, isn't it?

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